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SALUTATION TO FIVE

SALUTATION TO FIVE

by

SHANE LESLIE

Biography Index Reprint Series



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RETROSPECT

THE five essays in biography which compose this volume—Edmond Warre, Headmaster of Eton; Sir William Butler, British General and Irish patriot; Sir Mark Sykes, Orientalist and traveller; Mrs. Fitzherbert, wife of George IV; and Leo Tolstoy—have little in common except their personal interest in my mind—for this preface is autobiography.

They need framing in the manner that old photographs are glued into a family scrap-book. They need not be relatives but may be objects of hero-worship. All five have been so much a part of my life that I feel I shall carry their remembrance away with me. Warre, the god of Eton days; Butler, my first steersman on Irish troubled water; Tolstoy, inspiration of my Paris days; Mark Sykes, an Occidental star who dipped under the horizons of Versailles not to reappear. Mrs. Fitzherbert, naturally, was the one of the five I could not know while she lived. But her mysterious and gracious memory had remained like a family ghost in my home and I was destined to be her final champion with the pen.

The others passed one by one into my impressionable ken until I felt the debt could only be paid by writing. While weaving each into essay form, I found my own mind's biography collecting in the margins: like dust upon the gilt-edge.

Life is too short to decide whether chance or heredity, choice or environments play the strongest influences. All shared in mine but particularly certain characters, some strong and some quaint or queer. Thanks to books, one can double and redouble life's brevity. In a great library one can taste or drain the life-blood of the great writers. But the great who have not written, one must follow awhile and write into literature for oneself.

Autobiography is the result of following back one's own

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tracks and recording impressions which may one day be examined like any dead film of the past.

The mind of man is like some indestructible toy. It brings back visions out of invisible memory and it can construct possible futures. There is no doubt which is the more restful. Everyone who can think a little can flutter backwards in his own life or borrow the mightier wings of great writers. Not for nothing did the Latin for feather give us the word for *pen*!

I have found the power of fluttering back one of the pleasantest variants to life. I have envied the power of the Lady of Shalott to sit in a trance and watch a mirrored world pass by. The mirror of the mind is literature. The supreme gift of an education is the power of reading, the fascination of dipping into other worlds and being able to conjure greater spirits than oneself.

It reconciled me to being a *sap* at Eton under the athletic reign of Warre when any appreciation of literature left one despised and avoided. This was otherwise in the more civilised parts of the School, but I was dropped into a dark corner.

I was glad to exchange the Playing Fields for the Champs Élysées of Paris before I had been confirmed in Church principles or even in the right style of rowing.

The exploration of Letters kept me busily delighted in the Latin Quarter and I could have subscribed to what a great poet picked as the greatest line in Kipling: concerning fools that were flannelled and oafs that were muddy. The France of 1900 was largely innocent of the games of sport. Generally speaking, the Arts took their place. I once asked what incident most symbolised the gulf between English and French mentality. I was told that the sight of the Bishop of London playing a set of tennis with the President of the United States had been the most incomprehensible to the French. In France a Bishop and a President would as likely meet in a café over a game of dominoes!

The fact was that England emerged from the nineteenth century soaked in athletics. Every class clamoured for sport which was often healthier than today, for everyone attempted

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to play. Even the cheerful British form of politics was treated as a game. It was from the Speaker that the umpires of England learnt their integrity.

Warre certainly made Eton and all lesser schools in her wake athletic. That he was great in other ways our essay will show. The intellectual side was permitted by the masters but utterly scorned by the boys. The masters were ludicrously uneven, some incapable, others quaint unto caricature but amongst them were Arthur Benson and Hugh Macnaghten. I was lucky enough to serve two halves under Benson and four under Macnaghten. This alone was real education according to Plato. Boys fortunate enough to enjoy their teaching received an inspiration which has probably never been attained since. I cannot think of any modern Classes receiving such stimulation unless Bernard Shaw were given a Dramatic Class at Eton or Winston were made Head of Harrow.

Had I been at Macnaghten's House, I would have made him the hero of my Eton essay, but I only keep a score of letters and his memory lies in the graves of his boys who fell in the First World War. Thank God, he did not see the Second. The tragedy of his last years and his death in the river were sufficient. Macnaghten proved that Fifth Form boys will follow however high a form-master soars, provided they think him genuine. Benson behind his veil of melancholy made boys appreciate the niceties of language, comment, humour and a little irony. Also he told the English anecdote to perfection. His end was as miserable as Macnaghten's as though overstrain had played upon the over-gifted.

It was the rugged, yet almost radiant, Warre who furnished the background of the Eton I knew. He must have changed our lives, if only indirectly, but I would not have changed him, though there were cruel spots in the School he loved. I spent a year in Paris recovering from three years at the worst House that ever made gossip or legend at Eton. Sir Alexander Carr-Saunders and Colonel Harry Streatfeild witness me that some kind of recovery was needed by survivors.

It was an ironic provision by the gods that Eton at her greatest and most envied should have developed a quartet of

“bad houses” which all needed dissolution in the first decade of the new century. The horrors of “Long Chamber” were mentioned in Eton history, so perhaps strict history calls for an allusion to the blots upon Warre’s last years. No one can say whether they contributed to his physical collapse. His Eton was so resplendent that he never noticed the shadows. Much can be forgotten, but incidentally not one of the four delinquent houses was presided by a Classic. The four house-masters could not have translated a Greek play between them. Good teachers of their subjects they were, but they could no more conduct an Eton House than a bevy of curates could take a Bank at Monte Carlo. These were houses, from which escape was advisable into other houses conducted as well as White’s or the Turf Club, while the College Foundation corresponded to the Athenaeum. Escape was not easy. I remember Grenfells and Horners escaping from a “bad house” thanks to powerful and alarmed parents. My younger brother and I had to dree our weird (and very weird it was) until he escaped to Sandhurst on the way to a soldier’s grave, while I found a mixture of freedom, faith and frivolity in Paris.

The Sorbonne was not the only world I found open. There was also the fantastic world which I afterwards recognised in Marcel Proust’s dreamy gossip. Surely I had known some of those painted witlings and fops of the Faubourg St. Germain, so his books did not prove entirely phantasy to me. One of the exquisite type he analysed made a decided grab for me but I was warned, for he had previously tried to entangle my great friend, Jo Stickney, an American and the most promising Greek student at the Sorbonne. Jo Stickney had sailed into my life as soon as I reached Paris. A tall poetical Bostonian, the best-looking man in the Quartier, he ambitioned to return to Harvard and from the Chair of Greek renew the literary soul of New England. We were neighbours in the Rue d’Assas and mentally he took me by the scruff. Thanks to his laughing knowledge of the world, I disengaged myself from the poisonous garden which Proust has immortalised with all its thwarted pleasures and finessed affectations, and which Scott Moncrieff has wonderfully translated in that part of his work called “The Cities of the Plain”. The same

corruptor of youth had crossed Stickney who warned me amusingly. I was already learning a good deal more than French by accompanying him to the theatre. It was of course my first meeting with real artists, musicians and painters. Hitherto I only knew music as taught by old Lloyd the Eton organist and the fine arts as practised by the older Sammy Evans, the Drawing Master. I learnt now that sin and sex were the fibres of Art. But this Stickney contradicted and instead of the Decadence he offered me old "Uncle Henry" Adams, another wonderful Bostonian, who was living obscurely in Paris but has achieved posthumous fame by the publication of his *Education of Henry Adams*.

These remain very vivid days, like a little perfumed ash in the memory. Stickney and I mocked our would-be tempter in spite of his exquisite piano-playing. His form of temptation was garish, for he kept a fair lady whom he offered to the callow youths he wished to draw into tutelage. This was always symbolised for me in later years when I saw Wagner's *Parsival* and the scene when the magician summons the enchanting Kundry to overwhelm the hero in her snaky arms.

Henry Adams was no doubt a healthier instructor and thanks to him I went mediaeval at the sight of Chartres Cathedral. By a chance I was with him fifteen years later in Washington shortly before he died humming the Latin Hymns of Adam St. Victor in gratitude to Heaven, which had spared him the fate of his grandfather and great-grandfather, both born to be Presidents of the United States.

All this mental and moral commotion came to me in 1902-3: now to be reckoned half a century back. I can re-imagine this higher phase of my life from parts of Henry Adams' book: surely one of the shelf that every Aryan intellectual should know. He wrote of himself then as "tottering about with Jo Stickney talking Greek Philosophy or studying *Louise* at the *Opera Comique*". This delicious phantasy of Paris had just triumphed in musical form. Like Offenbach before, it made a date.

Adams had just been to Russia and shuddered at its inertia, which threatened China and John Hay, his friend who in the name of America withstood the Slavic path. Hay had been

Lincoln's secretary or batman. I heard much of him and of Senator Cameron (did not Mrs. Cameron cause the war with Spain?) and of Theodore Roosevelt, whom Adams described as "the quality that mediaeval theology assigned to God—he was pure act!" Based on mediaevalism, Adams was trying to "triangulate the future". His prophetic book shows how near he came. "Either Germany must destroy England and France to create the next unification or pool interests" (not bad for 1901).

From "Uncle Henry" I learnt that it was better to be a hermit in the White Sea than live in the White House. Also that the Virgin Mary was the dynamic centre of the Universe. Had she not propulsed Chartres from the mind of man? Incidentally I learnt that Democracy had failed. He had lived in London when Swinburne had red-gold hair and British ministers had been prevented with difficulty from accepting war on behalf of the South. It was always his relief to return to Ming china and Japanese prints.

He and Stickney cultivated the Oriental in art and I had the pleasure of bringing round a Japanese fellow-lodger to decipher some of Stickney's possessions. At one time he talked of learning Japanese, having exhausted Greek and Sanscrit. In the same spirit I took a course on Japanese poetry from Monsieur Revon. The Sorbonne supplied much that was lacking in Dr. Warre's curriculum.

Greek was Stickney's hobby and music his passion. When he was not correcting his Thesis on *les sentences dans la poésie grecque* he played delicately upon the violin. There came a terrible but triumphant afternoon when he defended his thesis against Croiset the Dean and the pick of the Sorbonne professors in his quiet Bostonian French. No Anglo-Saxon had essayed this challenge before and though he was found not to be entirely Gallic in his scholarship, they awarded him their highest degree. Harvard made him professor.

He helped me to tidy up my Fifth Form Greek and gave me the Greek Anthology bound with his delicate cipher on the morocco: the same cipher which marked the rice paper on which he set his lovely calligraph. He offered me a walking tour through Greece in the autumn of 1903 carrying satchels

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and alpenstocks. Alas! I preferred to return to Donegal and shoot grouse behind white, mauve-spotted pointers; alas! for I never saw him again. Two years later in Harvard he died of a brain tumour and some echo of the ancient song was buried beyond the seas.

I kept my copy of his Thesis, intending always to translate it for an unworthy world. Twenty years later I crawled round Harvard beseeching someone to exchange memories of my wonderful friend. But Harvard had entirely forgotten the son of her culture, who had taught the Sorbonne that America nourished something better than Hollywood cowboys and the profligate spawn of millionaires.

When I found that Harvard had forgotten him, I felt as though I had only imagined him. He might never have been . . . and the years continued to pass until I picked up George Santayana's *Middle Span* and found that he had once lived for him, though he had dropped the "Jo" and styled himself Trumbull Stickney. Whatever his mortal name, I felt that the gods reserved something more melodious for him in the Isles of the Blest. So Santayana had also found him a "learned friend and poet" and known the apartment "overlooking the quiet side of the Luxembourg Gardens". He also had been given the Thesis and knew the handful of classical poems which were to be the prelude of an American Shakespeare. *Sunt lacrimae rerum.*

Santayana told the end of the story, the return to the rough ideals of Harvard and imagined: "So Newman must have suffered when he became a Catholic. When would the ivy mantle those new brick walls or the voice modulate the Latin liturgy as it had done English?" I imagined him like a goatherd of Theocritus trying to pipe in the Rockies, but Pan had happier died in the Aegean seas than beyond Cape Cod.

As the result of listening to such as Henry Adams and Jo Stickney in Paris I formed a slightly erroneous view of Americans. I had enjoyed a privilege all the wealth of Boston could not acquire. I gathered that American men were kindly ironical and faintly godlike, but always devoted to the higher thought. Upon the fleshpots they cast their shoe, in Stickney's case a Grecian sandal out of a Flaxman Drawing. I had

heard much of the *Education of Henry Adams* distilled as conversation. I could not erase what I thought Americans talked from the juvenile jelly of my brain. For the time, my own education had been as wonderful and worthy of record as "Uncle" Henry's.

Paris opened a literary atmosphere and satisfied my imagination. Here one could browse upon books under the Odeon or on the *Quais*, pick, sample and read without shame or purchase. It was different from the dull quests to Mudie's or the Eton bookseller. Funds were limited and I remember my first choice lay between Hugo's *Notre Dame de Paris* and *Les maîtresses de Napoleon III*. Daudet was the only acquisition I had brought from Eton. In imitation of the radiant *Lettres de mon moulin* I wrote my first short story called *Le maître Brochet (inedit)*. It described an Irish boy's adventures with a monster pike. Daudet's short stories! There is nothing like them in English except Bewick's tailpieces.

I realised that literary life counted in France. It was not freakish or only fiddling with life. The Dreyfus case had set Zola high in English estimation, but he was asphyxiated by a stove soon after my arrival, or, as the religious papers announced, "strangled by an Angel passing at night!" He had written his Three Gospels but had been prevented from concluding the fourth. This did not prevent me from attending his funeral and, as I imagined, representing the literary side of Eton.

Of all the funerals I have attended, Zola's proved the most exciting. I arrived early at the Rue de Bruxelles where I viewed a huge hearse draped in black and silver with the monogram of Z. An officer in uniform advanced to place a wreath before the police hustled round him and removed the card. It was Dreyfus himself and commotion was in the air. As the procession started on the long trek to the cemetery of Montmartre, I joined the students who were demonstrating from the Quartier. It proved a lively march and we exchanged bitter sallies with the Royalists and anti-Dreyfusards in the crowds. There was a concerted plot to push the coffin and *pompes funèbres* into the Seine but the police and the glittering Cuirassiers prevented fisticuffs. It was a dull October twilight

by the time we straggled into the famous cemetery, where Heine's grave used to be heaped with nostalgic visiting cards. The scene was crowned by a funeral oration from no less than Anatole France which left us delirious. We marched past the grave after ransacking other graves for wreaths and dead chrysanthemums which were tossed in salute to the shouting of "Germinal! Germinal!" Though I have been present at the funerals of Sovereigns and Popes, I have never enjoyed one more.

In England there could be no parallel imaginable. There was no mighty oration over the corpse of Henry James and no angry clashes, that I can remember, when Swinburne or Alfred Austin were carried discreetly to their burial.

England is not a literary or artistic country and there can be no gloomier scene in the undertaker's calendar than a new deposit in Poets' Corner of Westminster Abbey. A new wax effigy at Madame Tussaud's causes more popular interest. But in France the great tradition survived. Writers are still estimated above politicians and only members of the Academy are reckoned "immortals". In England the immortals are a few elder statesmen and a bunch of even older favourite actresses.

Returning to the Quartier I started reading Zola's grim series devoted to the Rougon-MacQuart family, a huge Saga in supposed Naturalism, lit at times by flame or flash, but they called for endless grubbing. Life is too short to read authors wholesale. The best rule is to know each author by one or three masterpieces only, but well enough to pass examination. Out of Zola I chose *Rome*, *Le Rêve* and *La Débâcle*. *Le Rêve* could be read in a convent.

La Débâcle brought the word into every language. It means the total thaw which melts the security of ice and was applied to the French collapse in 1870 under the Bismarckian sun. It was a wonderful introduction to the wars which have savaged Europe since. The military science was correct and it should have been made a text-book for the British Army.

The English must have wondered since whether they have not suffered a débâcle of their own. Victorian England seemed enthroned like a glacier above the servile seas. Her

ice palaces were mistaken for rock-crystal, until they slid into the surrounding ocean carrying her puzzled denizens, like bears marooned on an iceberg, to debate angrily on questions of food or space.

Only a novel, but *La Débâcle* set English readers ahead of public men in realising the continental future. Punic and Peloponesian Wars wearied the minds of British schoolboys. They should have been set to study the American Civil War and the Franco-Prussian campaign. Both were utterly unknown to the curriculum of Eton or any other school. On these two wars the whole present has been poised.

Zola's ecclesiastical novel *Rome* I devoured after a trip to the City, which is undestroyable but not uncapturable to pen or apparently to armies. It was the City of Leo XIII and Cardinal Rampolla and Camille Barrère,¹ the French Ambassador for ever plotting to set Italy against England, and of Archbishops Stanley and Stonor posturing like Gog and Magog at the gates of the Vatican: with the stumpy little King rushing about like a schoolboy playing at being the Kaiser.

I read every sentence of *Rome* to myself aloud which is the quickest way of learning to talk a language. It was an enthralling parody of the Catholic life, immense and made to look a little monstrous, but henceforth I could always see ecclesiastics and their institutions as Zola painted them. In those pages the pre-Mussolini City of Black and White Society lives again. However anti-clerical, and in spite of the famous chapter in which the Cardinal refuses to allow the embrace of the dead lovers to be broken, the novel opened my eyes to a Universal Church and system impossible to visualise from Victorian England. The only other book which seems to indicate such a necessity for Europe is oddly enough the *Decline and Fall* by Gibbon, for, once the Roman Empire fell, History needed something to take its place if only as a general prop.

European countries and their capitals were more distinct

¹ Barrère was the *doyen* of the diplomats surrounding the Quirinal. The British were flabbergasted and attributed his hatred of England to the treatment his father received as an instructor at Woolwich. The elder Barrère had been a Communist refugee and was credited with a share in the murder of the Archbishop of Paris. His son used to take tea in the salon of an aunt of mine living in Rome and played bridge watching his *sous* like any bourgeois.

before Americanising. The Latin Quarter in Paris was noticeably French. The Cinema had not taken the place of the *Bal Bulier*, and the theatre of the Odeon was a cheap distraction for students.

French drama was startling, I found, after the English, which in the 'nineties had meant Gilbert and Sullivan, Beerbohm Tree, Dan Leno with Herbert Campbell at Drury Lane. Paris offered the *Comedie Française* with the classics recited flawlessly. *Louise* had created a furore in my time while Sarah Bernhardt was struggling in the Aiglon's top-boots at the theatre of her name. Survivors who saw her must have registered an odd emotion when Hitler sent the Aiglon's ashes to rest beside his father in the Invalides. If only the dream could have been completed and Sarah released from *Père Lachaise* to recite her lines for the occasion! No such scene is imaginable unless Sir Walter were brought back to receive the ashes of Bonnie Prince Charlie in Holyrood: or the body of Patrick Sarsfield could be shipped to Limerick and laid upon the Stone of the Broken Treaty.

At the Odeon one evening I heard Tolstoy's *Resurrection* acted as only emotional Latins know how. The sobbing audience was also French. I left the theatre a sadder if not a wiser man. So this was the terrible Social Problem, on which such rubbish had gushed, but was this the solution? It was a highly romantic turn to the treatment of the same in the Gospel. For many in those days *Resurrection* was a turning point. I remember stopping in the middle of Dostoevsky's *Crime et Châtiment* to read Tolstoy. It was turning from despair to hope. When I tramped the Paris streets I imagined myself as *Prince Nekludoff* and I found a *Maslova* in every prostitute. I felt inwardly that I could never rest until I had communed with Tolstoy himself, but three years at Cambridge were fated to come first.

In those days Russian novels were not read in England and in any case the best translations were in French. This had the advantage of preserving a foreign flavour when the characters were so removed from the English. When I conversed later with Tolstoy in French, the illusion that I had read him in the original remained.

From the Rue d'Assas I moved into the Rue Servandoni to be nearer the Latin heart and under the booming shadow of St. Sulpice, reminiscent of Manon Lescaut and of Renan. The dark caterpillar of students still crawled on Sunday from the seminary into the gaunt sprawling church, a signal that Vespers were beginning.

Lectures multiplied, sacred and profane. For me a new world of mediaevalism was opening. Gaston Paris, alas, suddenly died and I attended the orations in his honour. His books at least remained to enlighten me unto the poetry and legends of the Middle Ages, of which the English then preferred to know nothing. For them there was the *Cloister and the Hearth* to wade and Scott's rococco grottoes, but Gaston Paris made gargoyles live. There was something beside the Wars of the Roses, if it was only the *Romaunt de la Rose*, which he had edited, and from him came knowledge of Tristan and Iseult and above all Villon, the Prince of Ballad-writers with his refrains and *envois*. Why in the name of literary beauty had we not learnt the "Ballad of Dead Ladies" at Eton with the sob of true poetry, *Mais où sont les neiges d'antan*? No wonder that French was despised at English schools, a Cinderella cut off from fairy enchantment. It was the same with Verlaine and Baudelaire: but English instruction omitted every mention of the sensual however sensitively adduced. Gaston Paris led me to Huysmans with the suspicion that all that was lovely and all that was evil in the Middle Ages was waiting behind some dark corner in Chartres or Albi! It was possible that all the strange people who knelt or prayed or peeped behind capitals in illuminated manuscripts really existed!

Moral: one should find ways of living in more than one century. One's own times may prove disappointing. Who could dream that the twentieth would prove so bloody in all terms of bloodiness!

I attended lectures at the "Institut Catholique" under the benign friendship of old Mgr. Pechenard, who became Bishop of Soissons and had his Cathedral broken over his head by the Germans. Future Cardinals filled the Chairs and I picked up a little Canon Law which improved my French if not my

Latin. This I countered by hearing the great Lavissee lecture at the Sorbonne on French History. One could tell by the tremors in his audience where Catholics or anti-Clericals were sitting. Lectures could be intense in the wake of the unending *affaire* Dreyfus, intense compared to the boredom of lectures at Cambridge. Every range of French thought in every class had been sharpened by that astonishing mishap to the soul of France. Students were liable to stage their excitements on the boulevards. Did the Oxford Movement ever send a mob down the High? No gowns were torn on the Cambridge streets in metaphysical affray or even over the Tichborne Case.

At the "Institut Catholique" I met François Coppée urging open defence of the Churches before they were looted by Civil Servants. The expulsion of the Grande Chartreuse roused real fury in Catholic France. Had occasion arisen, I would have gladly figured in a riot organised by the faithful. I had to wait for Cambridge before engaging in a more secular rag.

The criss-cross of French Life, betwixt politics, religion, pretenders and *revanches* of different kinds is incomprehensible to the English, especially as French History is scarcely taught at all. Even English History is taught in schools in the manner of Bradshaw's Railway Guide. If the three B's were sincerely taught, the Bard, Bible and Bradshaw, as the elements of national education, the ghastly results of the School Board as well as the intellectual failure of Public Schools would not be upon us—but taught with German thoroughness and French imagination.

In default of French History I was lucky to receive a copy of Bodley's *France* as an Eton prize. From that moment the colours in the French criss-cross were revealed. In manner it lies between Borrow's *Wild Wales* and Bryce's account of the United States, without the bigotry of one or the dryness of the other. It is the exploration of a new country directed from within. From Bodley I learnt that every Frenchman has an enemy—another Frenchman. Also that Tradition is more powerful in Republican France than in England which has always compromised with Whig, Liberal, Socialist and preserved unity by stabling the muzzled wolf with the lamb.

But France is always carrying on two or three Civil Wars, of which Dreyfus was nominee of not the last. However, what matter?—France is a living Greece not a fossilised adjunct to the Balkans. And Paris remains the real Athens.

John Edward Courtenay Bodley became a personal friend later and I learnt that conversation was an art and not necessarily conducted by using the three enclytics—What Ho! Cheerio! and O.K. He was one of the last of the cultured Europeans. He had known intimately Cardinal Manning, Sir Charles Dilke, Oscar Wilde and a host of French leaders, writers, boulevardiers. What an Ambassador he would have made for England in the crucial days, but the Foreign Office preferred to send Lord Derby, who could not talk French, and one or two who were dumb in English.

Bodley was the only person who could appreciate every fibre in the Dreyfus case. He was cynically impartial and could gossip equally with a French Cardinal or Clemenceau. He opened a very large *armoire* in my literary life.

The Paris into which I was thrown was the embittered penitent of 1870. Since the disasters of the *débâcle* Paris had tried to reform morals as extensively as Haussmann had remade her arteries. The old Paris had gone, leaving only a few queer street corners for Impressionists to paint. The immense new Basilica on Montmartre labelled *Gallia poenitens* dominated the city. The licence and levity of the Empire was symbolised in the splendid nudities gracing the Imperial Opera House.

Paris was always Catholic enough to mark a catastrophe by a catafalque starring the vault of Notre Dame with candle-power. I recall the horrors whispered about the terrible fire which licked the noblest blood in France at the Charity Bazaar. The religious ceremony was insufficient, for a Dominican orator improved the occasion's agony by claiming that the dead were the sacrifice demanded by the Divine wrath for the sins of France. It was very Latin to lift a terrestrial accident to such sublimity but it made the Government very angry. Later came the *Messe de la Martinique* following the eruption of Mont Pelée. The relations of the dead were sufficient to fill the Cathedral. France certainly

understands the art of national mourning. In the old days we used to take crape and flowers to the statue of Strasbourg in the Place de la Concorde. The English have invented the phrase "no mourning" and the most magnificent occasions are missed. The only really widespread mourning since Queen Victoria's funeral has been for the "ashes" of English cricket, said to be interred in Australia under a ground, of which Bradman keeps the key.

Only a country that has been occupied or conquered understands national mourning and it was the sad notes of 1870 which underlay the whole life of the Republic, like an under-current in Chopin. The same note was discernible in the political life of Ireland or Poland.

As a student on the *rive gauche* I recalled very different intervals of childhood lived in fashionable Paris.

But life in Paris for children was different from fog-bound London which still resembled Doré's horrible pictures. Paris was still full of old beaux and characters like the Breteuils and the Marquis de Gallifet, whose fascination to children lay in the silver stomach which he carried as a trophy from the war of 1870. He was an aristocrat serving in a Republican Government till 1900. He was one who might have voted his King's death like Philippe *Egalité* but he might himself have been guillotined.

And there was Widor, who had survived the siege of Paris, still playing to the adoring ladies in the organ loft of St. Sulpice.

And there was Monsieur Eiffel himself, who had taken an enormous fancy to my aunt Clara. He gave her the chance of being the first lady to ascend the tip-top of the Eiffel Tower: and a photograph used to record the date and the event. Who now remembers Paris without the Eiffel Tower?

So much had passed since we lived on and off in Paris, late 'eighties and mid-'nineties. Those were the days of *perfide Albion* and no orchids for the Queen of England, whom the *gamins* of the Champs Élysées used to insult when we joined their play. I can recall the excitement of General Boulanger, who had fascinated the Paris crowd and incidentally Randolph Churchill, who thought him a kind of Tory Democrat saving

France. Our family lived in the Avenue Kleber and the old Prince of Wales was sometimes brought home after the theatre by my mother and Winston's, and very sleepy children were dragged out of bed to shake hands and promise to be soldiers. Later, my father used to describe how the carefree Prince used to escape his Equerry and accompany him to places permitted to ordinary folk but not to Royalty. He was never so happy as playing Haroun-al-Aschid and he considered the Parisians were his people far more than the English Nonconformists.

By the time I was a student, he returned as King and by his personal gesture brought France and England into union. Of course statesmen and soldiers and diplomatists prepared the brief and worked out the blue prints—but *le bon roi Edouard* achieved it by sheer courage and courtesy. This is known to anyone who could feel the pulse of Paris at the time. It was touch and go until he sailed into the Foyer of the Opera and complimented a famous actress on being symbolic of France.

It is forgotten how wildly anti-English France had become. The Boer War, Fashoda and even English feeling about Dreyfus had envenomed venom. French caricatures, even of the poor old Queen, were fantastic in their malice. Caron d'Ache made *Punch* a very sober sheet in comparison. The Prince figured in guises unknown to his subjects. One I recall in which he was drawn standing in evening clothes fingering a cigar while two heavily habited prostitutes prowled behind. It was to me far more of a picture than Matisse and Cezanne. I still have some of the caricatures of the Boer War. They were devilish in their art but they revealed something true about war.

The politics of the Quartier were violently pro-Boer, and at one time I found myself helping to welcome Dr. Leyds and the Boer Generals in the streets. But the King had accomplished the impossible and in President Loubet he found a most amusing counterpart, who looked rather like Kruger if he could have been dewhiskered, and dressed up by undertakers at the Bon Marché.

Loubet had succeeded President Felix Faure who privately

called England the enemy. No doubt his sudden death like that of the Prince Imperial could be traced to British agents, but that was another story! The cause of his death in a lady's arms could be guessed from the incredible epigrams which a Latin language allows. No doubt he was *plus felix que fort.*

I tore myself from my studies to honour the King. I was in the middle of a thesis and of an Eton novel in the style of Zola. I temporarily returned to Anglican worship to get a ticket to the little church in the Rue d'Aguesseau, where he was to appear on Sunday. This walk on foot to church reconciled the Nonconformist Conscience and was considered to have given the sacrilegious Parisians a good lesson. I had to assure Dr. Noyes, the parson, that I was not a Fenian or a member of any secret society burrowing on the other side of the Seine. I sat in a back chair inwardly hoping to have a chance of saving the King's life if he were attacked. Never was I closer to a Sovereign as he passed, smiling at the virgin pew-opener who collapsed in a heap. Our eyes poured tears as we prayed for "Our Sovereign Lord and King, Queen Alexandra (she had stayed at home), George Prince of Wales and all the Royal Family". Out I went on the Boulevards on the chance of knocking over Henri Rochefort's hat. That veteran with his foul *Lanterne* was holding out fiercely against the royal charmer. All in vain: for the two nations were locked together for peace and wartime.

Hedged with glittering Cuirassiers, King and President attended a gala Opera which I could only see from the surging streets. But the crowd had been won and won for ever. Henceforth the English Royal Family had a spiritual home on the Seine when they cared to use it. Shreds of the ancient Society were collected at that Opera to give elegance if not tradition to the dismal ladies of bureaucracy. It seemed unsporting when a courtesan, whom the King had known in Bohemian days, was asked to leave. It is a rule in French life that ladies and actresses, wives and courtesans never meet and it has preserved a pattern which has been entirely lost in England.

As for women, they were around us in the Latin Quarter,

but entirely as models or fellow-students. From friends I learnt that chastity was an ecclesiastical virtue not merely a recipe for training. In any case there was very little time for women and all my memories are gentle. I adopted the tolerant view that they should be reserved to console middle age instead of being the desolators of youth.

Adventures were not sordid and once the language had been mastered there were new friends and studies every week. Monsieur Revon, who lectured on Japanese lyrics, entertained in his country villa of a Sunday. Widor was always at home in his organ loft at St. Sulpice, making a mixture of High Mass and High Society. Such a lively contrast to Church Parade after Church in Hyde Park! And there was the Austrian Ambassadress, Countess Wolkenstein, a friend of my mother, a really great woman who spoke of the *ancien régime*, but she had known and protected and helped Wagner. That was her great memory. My mother had known such extraordinary people. Her doctor, who had brought her into the world, Dr. Péan, had attended Thiers on his deathbed. She had been born where he died, at St. Germain-en-Laye. She and her sisters as girls had fled from Paris before the siege of 1870. They had known the Mornys and Persignys. Sweetest memory was Aunt Clara's, for she had been chosen as the Prince Imperial's dancing partner, had played, hunted with him. An American girl would not cause the envy that a French one would rouse: hence her good fortune to be asked to Compiègne. My own mother had been too young but the Empress Eugénie remembered across the years and wrote to her when my brother was killed in 1914. One very odd friend my mother kept in Paris. When she came to see me, she always stayed in the Ritz which conflicted with my views, but she explained it was the cheapest hotel for her, as she knew old man Ritz himself and he insisted on giving her a tiny room whenever she passed. One day this legendary figure showed her a very old man slowly arranging things with much fuss. This was the man who gave Ritz work when he was penniless on the streets far far ago. Now he was an honoured pensioner: *l'homme qui a trouvé Ritz*.

The Paris of the great Exhibitions of 1889 and 1900 has gone like the Paris of Balsac: the Paris which built the Trocadero and *le petit Palais*: the Paris which entertained a Czar of all Russias—and an Emperor of India, like a Queen of Sheba laying herself out for visits of King Solomon. How the great ones have perished while the landmarks remain.

For me the aboding shrine was of St. Genevieve in her Latin Quarter, for she was the protectress of Paris as well as of students under examination. She was successfully invoked to ward off the invaders of 1914. It must have been a narrow shave, for German soldiers were buried in that year by the municipal firemen. In the Second War the hateful ones broke through, and it was the body of the Little Flower whom the fickle Parisians carried through the city like a spiritual disinfectant after the last Germans were expelled.

It is always St. Genevieve whom I visit and will visit if I ever pass through Paris again. A saint enshrined is a luxury of devotion not allowed in England. In callow youth I once asked a French tutor to show me the shrine of Joan of Arc. "*Mais vous l'avez brûlé!*" he exclaimed and I was silenced. It showed how much French history one learnt at school.

Her canonisation must be the only one which has stirred the modern world. A weird accompaniment, seemingly too terrible to be true, took place in England. It appeared that one of the great French nobles at her execution refused to allow her green faggots instead of dry. Green faggots smoked and smothered the victim before she was burnt. At any rate a curse descended upon his family and the last heir was dramatically burnt to death in an English country house near where I was staying. There was a question of foul play and a love affair so his relatives came over to make inquiry. They consulted Lord Derby, who told me he advised them to drop the matter. The world is often stranger than believable: but the fire appeared to have been a husband's vengeance.

France gave me a second language and a new background. My real education was over and I was ready to take up the conventional and artificial one proffered at the English University. Stickney used to say life resembled a succession

of tunnels, during which one recollected what one had passed through and prepared for the next station, which in my case was Cambridge.

Books, letters and the like are flotsam lying on the beaches which stretch back into the tide, out of which each spirit has come and into which each shall return. I learnt that printed paper and old letters were no longer like dead seaweed. They were full of meaning and possible enchantment, I learnt to attach new meanings to the old autograph books at Glaslough which my grandmother had collected during the century. As children we had looted them for their foreign stamps. There were notes and envelopes addressed to "Mrs. Leslie" by Dickens and Thackeray including the last letter Thackeray ever wrote, which was a charming regret that the Doctor forbade him to come to dinner.

A stage had come in my life when I sold my stamp collection and began buying books. The philatelic fibre in my heart had died when my dear father gave away his collection of imperforates collected in the 'sixties! We were allowed to look at them as a treat, but when a great collector asked to see them, my father, surprised that a grown-up man cared for such trifles, gave him the lot! Later they figured in sales and we children had to dry our tears. In the autograph line everything in my grandmother's folios was safe, but there was looting of treasure at times. A great-uncle had stuck a letter of Shelley into the Poems. That went. Worst of all there had been a poem written by Swift to Robin and Henry Leslie. His visit to Glaslough was more than a legend. He had preached in the tubular pulpit: and the poem turned up in the South Kensington Museum. A terrible looter had left traces, for even the family pedigree written by Bishop John Leslie, the founder of the family, had been torn out of his Bible. Family libraries are full of such tragedies. There was a lady in London who remembered the lost letter at Wilton, which mentioned "The man Shakespeare". No doubt some Baconian devoured it when coming for a visit from Salisbury.

The best fate of autographs is to pass to Museums through the hands of benefactors. I collected autographs Orientalwise for their beauty not for the writer's fame. This is still a

possible hobby. But life is too short to collect at all. It is best to coalesce with other collections which are in safe places.

The most remarkable part of my grandmother's collection was the Papers of Mrs. Fitzherbert. They had reached her in a mysterious way. Her mother had been adopted daughter of the benevolent lady, who had clandestinely married George IV of joyous memory. This was the gilded skeleton in the cupboard. My grandmother and sisters had divided the Fitzherbert loot entire: pictures, jewels and papers. The valuables went for the most part to their brother Lord Portarlington but my grandmother had the autographs, including the famous box, which a faithful servant had saved from the Duke of Wellington, when he descended upon Mrs. Fitzherbert and burnt all her papers to save scandal. But there was no moral scandal only a continual embarrassment to the Royal Family at the time. Vaguely I believed I should be chosen to champion Mrs. Fitzherbert with my pen at the last.

Incidentally the possession of Fitzherbert relics entails the weirdest correspondence with claimants to the Throne in America. The stage has been reached when letters referring to their present Gracious Majesties in "inverted commas" are not answered. But photographs showing likeness between well-meaning Colonials and Queen Victoria continue to arrive even in this year of grace. The climax came when an American party arrived at the church in Brighton where my great-grandmother erected Mrs. Fitzherbert's effigy wearing the Royal wedding ring. This monument they claimed as theirs. The old priest, Mgr. Johnson, sent a message of alarm. As a result, it was arranged to add a sentence to the anonymous inscription on the marble in our family name. This constitutes myself the hereditary guardian of one of the most interesting memorials of the Regency extant. His present Majesty conserves the wedding licence, Lord Portarlington the wedding ring, and my family the engagement ring. America can have the pictures for which they have paid handsomely.

The first novel I had attempted in Paris was about Eton. The Public School novel is almost the only literary form which

is peculiar to England. I have always considered that Talbot Reed's *Fifth Form at St. Dominic's* the model of the type. I made the mistake of writing in the style of Zola instead of Daudet, whose *Petit Chose* is a sign that he could have written such. Losing heart rather than shying at indecency, I dropped my experiment. Twenty years later, after the First War had tested all British institutions, I wove a tapestry in mock-heroics of Warre's Eton. It was less fiction than a historical document stuffed with snapshots of characters, recognisable and I hope not unkindly. I was under the influence of Léon Bloy at the time which accounts for all I wrote under the guise of novels. *The Oppidan* was scarcely a novel but a kind of carnival in which the masks tumbled off too easily. But Warre was impossible to mask and I brought him in striding and sounding to the life. It was no more than a sketch or caricature (like that by Spy in *Vanity Fair*) but my subsequent essay will do better justice to him and his times. He really was an eminent Victorian and deficiencies only shaded his splendour. History washes out the silly criticism of his day. He stood in the same solid relations to his century as Mr. Gladstone or Queen Victoria. The more human these can be found, the more simply they are arranged amongst the facsimile divinities of the era.

Family considerations have enabled me to add a final essay on Mark Sykes, whose biography of a quarter of a century is out of date. An even more remarkable character was his brilliant mother, who for various reasons was treated as a family skeleton in her lifetime. Penelope Leslie, my great aunt, was her mother, but we were not allowed to come under Jessica's friendship because of her defection to Rome. After a flirtation with Ruskin as a girl, she had taken to the pen. Her novels showed up the families with whom she was connected, a little unkindly. *The Macdonells* was an apparent pseudonym for the Leslies. Only the very Victorian family governess Miss Robinson appeared *en clair*. The Cavendish-Bentincks and Lowthers also found themselves in distorting mirrors. Mark was her most genuine creation.

Soldier, explorer, diplomat, politician, he was at one time the white hope of the Tories and of the English Catholics.

Humourist, caricaturist and Orientalist he was also a *beau sabreur sans reproche*. Judge of him by the friends who loved and admired him: Aubrey Herbert, Dr. Monty Rhodes James, George Wyndham, Howard de Walden, Ronald Storrs and a host of Yorkshire Tykes and Arabs in the East. When he died, his was a loss as serious to Tory Democracy as Rupert Brooke's to English Letters or Tom Kettle's to Irish politics.

The Stately Homes have often bred strange types but Yorkshire has seldom claimed so exotic a Squire, unless for the famous Waterton, who like Mark was a traveller and a pupil of the Jesuits. Mark had no time for sport or even for the famous Sledmere stud. He went his own sweet way, an actor and mimic at home, an explorer in the East. Life was too great a rush for him to suffer education. It was a rush from the age of three when his mother hurried him into the Catholic Church under the auspices of the Duke of Norfolk as his godfather. Jessica planned to commemorate the return of the Sykes family into Mother Church by a plan grandiose enough to include the building of a Cathedral in Westminster in a style interesting to Sir Tatton. The finest Gothic church in Vienna was to be reproduced at the cost of the Sledmere estate. Cardinals Manning and Vaughan were allowed to toy with the thought.

Jessica's courage was equal to her generosity. When her brother-in-law Christopher lost his fortune in trying to entertain the Prince's set, it was Jessica who descended upon Marlborough House and insisted on avoiding the bankruptcy, and so it was! Cavendish-Bentincks and Leslies were left gaping with astonishment. Had Jessie dared to blackmail the Prince? That was the question which Society asked. At any rate she saved poor Christopher by her threats to explain the bankruptcy in Court!

Further, she was good enough conversationalist to engage Randolph Churchill, the hardest nut at the dinner table in those days. During Doncaster Week she always entertained a brilliant party at Sledmere, while Sir Tatton designed churches in an upper room. Baccarat was still the game of high Society before it faded in the Tranby Croft scandal. Lord Russell of Killowen was one of the Sledmere parties

and thereby arose one of the oddest incidents possible in an English Court of Law.

Jessica nominally ran Tatton's finances and as he had an aversion to signing cheques, she often added the signature which was accepted. Eventually an Insurance Company presented a bill for £40,000 which he refused to pay. The case came into Court and poor old Sir Tatton, with his shawl arranged by his loving wife, entered the box. Rather than allow his parents to disagree, Mark nobly undertook to pay the sum out of his own prospects. One moment was of Gilbertian tempo. Jessica's cheque books were called for, but luckily had been mislaid and by the time they had been fetched, the case had moved elsewhere. A family friend noticed the amazed solicitor consulting them and finding that the first stub recorded a baccarat debt to Lord Russell, who was nervously presiding the trial!

Such were Mark's strange surroundings at home, but he spent most of his life travelling, even as an undergraduate. The unique certainly led to the unique. No one proved quite so chivalrous, so comic, so valiant, so gifted as Mark. He was just too good to be nothing but an M.P. for Hull, and the good God snatched him back. Not in vain had he been offered by his mother at the Oratory altar.

It was a young death, which felled the friends who loved him most to the ground. Many hoped to see a Tory Democrat, a Yorkshire Catholic in the Cabinet. There were many threads in his hands apart from the sympathies he had acquired in the Middle East. His knowledge of Ireland made him *the* possible mediator. His powers of humour and improvisation might have been successful even among the playboys of the Western Shore.

To his family it was a bitter stroke, as when the tomb opens not upon due winter nor upon gathered autumn but upon "youth's scented manuscript". And the writing was not finished.

It seemed difficult to reconcile his sudden death at the Versailles Conference with the Providential scheme. The forces for good seemed to be calling him from both East and West. But there is another side. After thirty years it

can be realised how much he was spared. With his hatred of injustice he might easily have met the fate which befell George Wyndham in Ireland or Lord Moyne in the Orient.

An essay on Sir William Butler recalls my early adherence to the Irish Cause. A General in the British Army, a friend of Parnell, Gordon, Wolseley and Buller, he had passed through a storm of recrimination owing to his pro-Boer policy while holding the command at the Cape. With a long knowledge of African Wars and of the Boers he refused to press the threats of his employers. He was recalled and the disastrous Boer War was waged against his advice and will and, as it turned out, against his careful plans. Fifty years have passed since the Century of Wars began. It began with the Boer War which proved what Greek Tragedy called the opening of troubles. 'Trouble-trouble—the witches' cauldron has never ceased to sizzle or overflow. Butler believed War need not have come and that Kruger with all his faults deserved to keep his small place in the burning African sun. Fifty years have passed and History is beginning to decide that perhaps he was right. His memory has received bitter scorn and derision. Let this essay prove the beginning of a vindication.

I had no fear in joining the Irish Cause when Sir William Butler called it just: and generously answered for me when I stood for John Redmond at the Home Rule Elections of 1909 and 1910. I salute his memory. He also could have been *the* mediator between England and Ireland.

MRS. FITZHERBERT

IN the unceasing contest of Fiction against Truth in history there have been a number of personal narratives which leave imaginative romance remotely behind. All the novels written in the days of the Regency could not produce a story so strange or thrilling as the marriage of Mrs. Fitzherbert to the Prince of Wales who subsequently became Regent.

There have been many obstacles to writing a full and final version. A century after Mrs. Fitzherbert's death such a biography appeared but by force of enemy action the number of copies was much reduced. This essay summarises what must remain out of print for a considerable time.

Mrs. Fitzherbert supposed that her Life would one day be written but full of lies, as an Irish Bishop declared of *Gulliver's Travels*. So many of her papers were destroyed that a biography has seemed a miracle.

Mrs. Fitzherbert sized her own position neatly by saying that though she was not considerable enough to become the wife of the enamoured Prince, her name forbade her to be mistress. No doubt it would have saved herself and the Royal Family and Parliament endless trouble if she could have followed suit to Mrs. Jordan, who settled down as the mother of the Duke of Clarence's children without any worry beyond the financial. When Clarence became King William IV, his bastards were ennobled and one even was dispensed to receive Anglican Orders without anybody feeling or thinking the worse.

Mrs. Fitzherbert's difficulty lay in the form of service which had passed between her and the Prince, which, however illegal, irregular and clandestine, was a marriage. Even if it were null in the eyes of the Law, it was not valueless on the

Continent or in Catholic circles. It might count for something in the eye of God, but this the legalists might overlook. Those whom it most concerned in the State took some trouble to deny it and, that proving fruitless, attempted to destroy every trace upon earth.

Whole correspondences have been burnt in the presence of witnesses. Letters, notebooks and even the margins of printed books have been scissored. The great secret could not be kept secret, but it could be largely deprived of proofs. As executor to George IV the Duke of Wellington descended upon his true widow and burnt all the letters which had passed between them. From the wreck Mrs. Fitzherbert preserved the three documents preserving her name with Posterity:

The letter which contained the Prince's proposal to marriage;

The marriage licence signed by both;

The Will which the Prince wrote cutting off the Princess of Wales with a shilling and bequeathing his entire possessions to Mrs. Fitzherbert.

These were the celebrated papers concealed in Coutt's Bank, against which relatives and legatees and pretended descendants knocked in vain for the rest of the century. The Gordian knot was cut by King Edward VII who simply ordered their removal to the secret archives in Windsor. And all this trouble arose from a lady's efforts to keep respectable, but her innocent efforts intrigued Society, outraged the British Public, kept the Whigs out of power and seemed to imperil the throne. In his *History of England* Sir Archibald Alison pointed out that under other circumstances this lady, who had died a few weeks before the opening of the Victorian era, might herself have sat upon the Throne.

Mrs. Fitzherbert's letters to the Duke of York were returned to her and for two years she was perusing and burning what was "the best private and public history of the country from the close of the American war to the death of the Duke". Her letters to George IV began in 1785 and lasted till 1806.

"Oh dear, oh dear", sighed Creevey, "that I should not have seen them!" And so sigh we all.

Maria Anne Smythe came of old Catholic and Royalist stock. Their Baronetcy dated from the Restoration. Their motto *Regi semper fidelis* (to King ever faithful) assumed poignant values in the life of the most beautiful daughter of the House. Her fidelity proved not merely worthy of a subject but of a heroic spouse. What she must have suffered in keeping the marriage secret under most malicious provocation only a woman can understand. Her position was unique in history. How often in life it has been necessary for a mistress to pretend to the part of a wife. Mrs. Fitzherbert was the only wife who for reasons of State had to pretend to be the mistress. Her unselfish conduct throughout the life of her husband won her the respect and affection of the whole Royal Family.

She was born almost exactly between the Protestant Revolution of 1688 and Catholic Emancipation in 1829. The Faith was fading. Pressure of Laws and fines, lawyers and fanatics had reduced the old Catholic ranks. It took a little of the old British obstinacy to persevere. The Smythes held on grimly and when "the White Rose of England" was brought up in their midst, her beauty was not set to snare neophytes but to hold together some of the old Catholic fortunes. She was married to Mr. Weld of Lulworth, a widower a quarter of a century older, but he died in the same year, before he had signed a Will in her favour. She was then secured to the old house of Fitzherbert living at Swynner-ton Hall. She married the twenty-fifth Lord of the Manor of Norbury but he died owing to the athletic practices he took to ensure his life. Mrs. Fitzherbert was left a widow for a second time before reaching the age of twenty-five.

Her life, now properly provided, should have become pious or pleasant, according to the fashion of those times. Mrs. Fitzherbert seemed willing to make it both, for she settled in Mayfair when London Society vied with Versailles. She bought a house at the Marble Arch end of Park Street where the large modern building stands called Hereford House. Mrs. Fitzherbert's home possessed a garden with walls susceptible of romantic approach.

There are various versions of her first meeting the Prince, then the most desirable bachelor in Christendom: whether he noticed her driving in the Park (then unsullied by the Hackney vehicle) or whether he observed her in Lady Sefton's box at the Opera and immediately demanded an introduction.

The result was not unflattering though embarrassing. Instantly declaring himself enamoured he insisted on her constant presence and refused to grace any party, drum or rout to which she was not invited. He dropped every paramour and scattered any incipient admirers of Mrs. Fitzherbert. Life could not have been more dazzling but she decided not to exchange the gold of good conscience for the ill-glittering tinsel of a Royal concubine.

Flattery failing, the Prince adopted a romantic ruse in 1784. He fell upon his sword and, when his wound was bandaged by Surgeon Keate, threatened to tear away the bandages unless Mrs. Fitzherbert entered Carlton House. Keate and the Prince's friends arrived in panic at Mrs. Fitzherbert's but she smelt the stratagem and refused to move until the famous Duchess of Devonshire consented to accompany her. The trembling company drove to Carlton House where Mrs. Fitzherbert promised to marry the Prince who placed a ring upon her finger, borrowed from the Duchess, who returned with Mrs. Fitzherbert to Devonshire House where both signed a paper agreeing that promises thus obtained were entirely void.

The next move was with Mrs. Fitzherbert, who instantly left the country. She had connexions in Holland and France, where she had been educated by the Ursuline nuns. A letter of 18 pages from the Prince followed her, threatening to end his life and forwarding bracelets not as a lover but as "the tenderest of husbands". One sentence did credit to both: "You know I never presumed to make you any offer with a view of purchasing your virtue. I know you too well."

The Duchess wrote in great consternation to the Prince imploring him to consult the leader of the Whigs, Charles Fox. The Prince had no more devoted friend but the possibility of a Catholic wife meant the forfeiture of the Throne and the end of the Whigs. The Prince would never be in a position

to make Fox Prime Minister. The Prince eased his personal agony by visits to Brighton, sometimes riding there and back in five hours; or visiting Fox with hysterical threats to sell his jewels and escape to America with his beloved. He informed James Harris that he would pass the Crown to the Duke of York.

Mrs. Fitzherbert's visit to Holland led to friendship with the Royal Family who were negotiating with the English Court in the hope that the Princess of Orange might become Princess of Wales. The Princess consulted the tactful Mrs. Fitzherbert, utterly unconscious that she was her most dangerous rival.

In fact the Prince, having felt the temper of Mrs. Fitzherbert's conscience, decided to offer the minimum terms for a clandestine wedding. Before she agreed to return, she had received a letter of 37 pages which she considered an honourable though tumultuous proposal. He was willing to be united with her in the presence of two Catholic witnesses chosen by herself, while he reserved the choice of a religious Minister. He only asked that she would never reveal the ceremony during his lifetime. He was twenty-five, she was twenty-eight, and both felt that Fate, if not a higher Power, had thrown them together.

The King had not allowed him to proceed abroad in spite of his touching pleas on the score of economy. His Majesty felt certain that the object was to marry an English lady and even suspected that the marriage might have taken place. The Prince wrote and talked as though the King would accept the situation. None the less the secrecy of the grave was maintained over the actual ceremony which took place on December 15, 1785. As a sop to the King, he was ready to make over the succession to the House of Hanover to the favourite son, the Duke of York. Mrs. Fitzherbert's mother was informed, the Cumberlands and Devonshires were invited, but none were present. There was no best man unless for Orlando Bridgman who remained with a drawn sword on the steps of Mrs. Fitzherbert's house. There was a considerable difficulty in engaging a parson as several clergymen of standing were affrighted by the prospect of committing treason.

Eventually the Rev. Robert Burt was bailed out of jail and consented to perform the ceremony for the sum of £500 and the promise of a Bishopric, should the bridegroom ever become King. He died before attaining his spiritual ambitions and his name would have been forgotten if he had not confessed his part on his deathbed.

Henry Errington and John Smythe signed as witnesses to the certificate which was written in the Prince's best script. The legal impediments could not have been more overwhelming: but in the Canon Law of the Church they were free. The marriage decrees of the Council of Trent had not been proclaimed in England and as the Sacrament of Matrimony is conferred by the married themselves Mrs. Fitzherbert felt that she had done all that was possible to obey the sentiment of the Catholic Church. As for the Act of Settlement and the Royal Marriage Act, they were not made in Heaven.

Amid a crescendo of gossip and bewildered rumour the happy pair set up their married life. They fell under the pen of Horace Walpole and the pencil of Gillray. Mrs. Fitzherbert moved to a house in Pall Mall to be nearer Carlton House, for she refused to live under the same roof as the Prince. It was the same at the Pavilion in Brighton which she only occupied when he needed nursing. The general opinion was expressed by the Archbishop of Canterbury that it was "decidedly odd". So Brighton, the Queen of Watering Places, rose from the waves. The choicest spirits in Society gathered round the Steyne. Villas suitable to the Beaux and Dandies were built under the bulbous shadows of the Pavilion. Mrs. Fitzherbert's contribution was a small house which survived to bear the symbolic lettering Y.M.C.A. Later she built the Catholic mission including a little church in the classical style. The Prince himself wandered amongst his guests and camp-followers like the Caliph in the Arabian Nights.

There was no shadow upon the splendid scenes enacted in Pall Mall or the Steyne except the visibly swelling debts. The Whigs were reluctant to extract the necessary funds from the austere Pitt. The Prince fell back upon his closest friends in the House, Fox and Sheridan, to obtain relief. The Debate

was fought between Whig and Tory under a cloud of rumours. When Fox rose to scatter the calumny of which everyone was thinking, he never mentioned a name or a marriage except as something "which never had and common sense must see, never could have happened". Pitt and his followers were discomfited for they had bluffed and met the fate of bluffers. Fox appeared to give a direct contradiction from the Prince's mouth. It was accepted and the debts were paid by the nation.

If Pitt felt fooled, poor Mrs. Fitzherbert felt disgraced. She insisted that Fox had rubbed her name in the mud. The actual blow was broken to her by the Prince, who remarked with the casual optimism which enabled him to surmount impossible difficulties: "Only conceive, Maria, what Fox did yesterday. He went down to the House and denied that you and I were man and wife!" As Fox had done so on the strength of a Royal letter, his feelings can be imagined when Uncle Errington curtly informed him outside Brooks' Club that he had been misinformed as Mr. Errington had been present at the marriage! Fox crept away to lick his paws.

Mrs. Fitzherbert herself was so grieved that the Prince sent Sheridan into the House to soften or simplify matters. Mr. Grey, to whom he bashfully owned that a ceremony had taken place, had simply refused the task, so it came to "Well, then, Sheridan must say something". Sheridan's glucubrations were received by the House of gentlemen with good-humoured amusement and for the time the matter was over, especially as the Royal Dukes of York and Gloucester rallied to the injured lady. On the other hand Dukes like Rutland were unwilling that their Duchesses should touch skirts with Mrs. Fitzherbert.

All proceeded merrily again until the Prince's debts once more assumed mountainy proportions. Seven years had passed since the last appeal to Parliament: but this time it was clear that Pitt declined to bluff or be bluffed. The Prince was required to give the country a Princess of Wales and the prospect of an heir to the Throne. He realised his dilemma: either he must declare his marriage to Mrs. Fitzherbert and pass the Crown to the Duke of York or he must commit

bigamy. Relying on her secrecy, he decided to marry any suitable German Princess. In compliment to Mrs. Fitzherbert, at least he chose the uglier of Brunswick in preference to the heroine who became Queen Louise of Prussia.

The year 1794 was spent in letting Mrs. Fitzherbert down lightly. In June he wrote her a charming letter which she received while dining with Clarence. There was a subsequent communication for she inscribed the first: "This letter I received the morning of the day the Prince sent me word he would never enter my house. Lady Jersey."

Lady Jersey he used as a kind of bridge between his two wives. Still the Prince was eager to make Mrs. Fitzherbert a good allowance, which Uncle Errington regarded as honourable alimony. The King and the Lord Chancellor hastened to oblige him in the matter of "a Lady who has been distinguished by your regard".

Mrs. Fitzherbert, hardly believing he could enter into a second marriage, retired with the utmost dignity and grief to Margate, where Admiral Payne made the utmost efforts to tranquillise her. By the time she had returned to Brighton, it could be reported to the Prince that she only wished to study his happiness. The Prince informed Payne that he sought to make her position as comfortable as possible but the marriage-knot he guillotined with the cutting words "*mais tout est fini*".

In April 1795 the Prince married the hapless Caroline who had been fetched by Harris and received with the damping words, "Harris, fetch the brandy"! All parties concerned endured some agony of mind. The Prince in a fit of remorse was seen galloping wildly round Mrs. Fitzherbert's country retreat the afternoon previous to the ceremony. He assured Clarence on the way to his marriage that he could never love anyone else. The King was decidedly nervous and insisted on Clarence not leaving his brother for some days previously. The Archbishop made an agonising pause during the service in case the tortured bridegroom wished to relieve his conscience—but no, looking like a deathmask, George, Prince of Wales, was united to the Princess who duly played her part and by January of 1796 gave Crown and Country an

heiress: the Crown she was not allowed to wear and the Country, of which she became the injured Queen.

Much tears, ink and laughter have been expended on that unhappy lady who added one perfect jest to the history of the times. She had the unique misfortune of being tried by the House of Lords for adultery, when she confessed she had committed that sin but once and that was with "Mrs. Fitzherbert's husband"! It is pleasant to know that the two wives bore each other no rancour, as each had been placed in an agonising position by the same unscrupulous husband. Caroline expressed her admiration for the real wife knowing she herself was only a State substitute. Mrs. Fitzherbert ordered her house on Pall Mall to be illuminated in honour of the official wedding. She was always doing things which cannot have occurred to any other woman in history.

Certainly she was the only Catholic lady who ever applied to the Pope for permission to live with the Prince of Wales in the lifetime of the Princess. This came through the Prince's frantic desire for Mrs. Fitzherbert's return after he had dismissed the Princess Caroline. As soon as the Princess Charlotte was born, he wrote a passionate Will in Mrs. Fitzherbert's favour leaving "the wife of my heart and soul" all his earthly property as well as the fond request that they should be buried together with panels opened in their coffins to permit their ashes to mingle after death.

The Royal Family added their supplications and the Duke of Cumberland brought her a letter of passionate misery declaring that his doom was fixed and that if her answer remained unfavourable he would instantly communicate with the King. This would involve a declaration of the marriage and place her brother and uncle under a treasonable guise. Mrs. Fitzherbert was really alarmed and asked only for time during which she could appeal to Rome. She had done her loyal utmost to uphold the intention of the Church in her married state. She now called for support from the Pope.

While the appeal was pending the Pope died and a Conclave took place in Venice which was attended by the Cardinal Duke of York. Had he been raised to the Papacy, it would have been the duty of "Henry IX" to settle the marriage

state of the future George IV. As it was, Pius VII was elected and received the appeal from the Rev. Mr. Nassau the following year, 1800. The marriage was described to the Pope in writing and handed to two consultors. "These decided in favour of the marriage" and this decision was delivered as the Pope's in the imperishable Latinity of a Brief.

All now was for the best and indeed the happiest years of the romance followed. The "so-called Princess of Wales," to use his phrase, was banished and only Lady Jersey played the part of a snubbed hornet, when the Prince appeared at parties with his obvious wife. These years Mrs. Fitzherbert described as years of poverty in that they had to borrow from faithful servants, but they were "as merry as crickets". Royalty beamed and only the new Duchess of York, who was royal from the beginning, could not bring herself to treat her as a sister-in-law.

A new trouble rose on the horizon and that was the possession of Mrs. Fitzherbert's adopted daughter, Minny Seymour. She had taken to herself two adopted daughters: Minny, who became Mrs. Dawson Damer, and Maria Anne, who became Mrs. Jerningham. It is as well to say that after prodigious research it is impossible to find any evidence that Mrs. Fitzherbert's union with the Prince was fruitful except that in one letter she addressed the husband of Maria Anne as her "son in law". The Catholic register in Brighton has been mutilated but this is purely negative.

Minny Seymour was believed by the Prince to be his child. She was his "Minny" and he was her "Prinney". He settled money upon her and took a vast interest in her fate. She was legally the daughter of Lord Hugh and Lady Horatia Seymour and had been bequeathed after their deaths to Mrs. Fitzherbert. The secret of the marriage, it is known, had been revealed to the Seymours. The situation demanded a series of subterfuges which could be accepted by Society.

Unfortunately the Seymour Guardians were convinced that Minny was of their stock and that it was their duty to remove the child not so much from a Roman Catholic influence as from the atmosphere of a Royal liaison. Like Charles Fox they had been misinformed. But there is no possibility

that Minny was the daughter of the Prince by Lady Horatia. Often the accepted version is the truth and in any case legal action was invoked, though Lord Hugh had mentioned all his other children in his Will.

When the Guardians took action, the Prince made flattering proposals if Minny could be safely berthed with Mrs. Fitzherbert, but in vain, and the matter had to be fought in the Court of Chancery. The Prince was a good fighter and threw his whole energies into the Seymour Case. Physicians called attention to the dangers which removal was likely to cause the child. The Bishop of Winchester testified to her mastery of the Protestant Catechism. The legal Guardians insisted on the religious grounds leaving the field open to Romilly to point out the "peculiar advantage from the patronage and protection of the Prince". This was getting curiouser and curiouser.

The appeal passed to the Lords where the Prince canvassed on behalf of Mrs. Fitzherbert. The Royal Dukes supported the Prince except Gloucester, who was related to the Seymours. Before a division was taken, Lord Hertford, as head of the Seymours, undertook the guardianship which was immediately agreed. He then entrusted Mrs. Fitzherbert with the child.

Mrs. Fitzherbert had secured the private assistance of Lady Hertford but in regaining a child she lost a husband. Lady Hertford henceforth demanded her acquiescence in the Prince's devotion to herself. From this grew the liaison between the Prince and Lady Hertford which accompanies the history of the Regency. Even at Brighton the Prince, after spending the mornings in private with Mrs. Fitzherbert, was afraid to notice her the same evening in the Pavilion lest the report should reach the arrogant Lady Hertford.

The value of Lady Hertford to the Regent was due to her Protestant faith rather than to her features. The caricaturists mercilessly crowned her husband with the cuckold's horns but as in the reign of Charles II the populace felt confidence in "the Protestant whore". With the madness of the King and the Regency of the Prince a certain amount of anti-Catholic feeling had developed. Both the Regent and Mrs. Fitzherbert were susceptible to a hangover from the days of the Gordon

Riots. They acted in different manners. The Prince considered his own safety: Mrs. Fitzherbert that of others. She destroyed the Papal Brief authorising her to live as wife with the Prince and scissored the names of her two Catholic witnesses from her Marriage Certificate. It would save them from possible pains and penalties.

There was a movement to call the Prince to state whether he was married to a Papist or not before he took the oath as Regent. He decided to break for the last time with Mrs. Fitzherbert. The banquet he offered the Royal Family of France made a good opportunity. This was the famous feast which the son of the demented gave to the children of the decapitated. It was the glittering prelude to the Regency. Princess Caroline was not asked, but Mrs. Fitzherbert received an invitation. She called on the Regent to ask if she sat at a lower table or as hitherto with the Royalties. When she learnt that she had been relegated to a lower seat she gracefully withdrew but this time from the Prince's life for ever. She was convinced that Lady Hertford's influence had excluded her from the Royal table. The Protestant influence was in the ascendant and the new Prime Minister, Mr. Perceval, had led against Mrs. Fitzherbert in the Seymour case. The ground was clear for the agitations which ended finally in Catholic Emancipation.

But Mrs. Fitzherbert took no part in those controversies. In vain she had advised the Regent to call his old friends the Whigs to office. Lady Hertford brought in the Tories. It took the most downright of Tory diehards, the Iron Duke himself, to induce the Prince as King to sign the Bill admitting Catholics to full citizenship.

Mrs. Fitzherbert was happy to find herself outside the coils of the Regency as well as of the unpopuliarities of the Reign, which were borne on the pearly shoulders of Lady Conyngham. The Regent and his wife did not meet again. She passed into retirement and good works at Brighton. The only occasions which brought her to London were connected with Minny, whose future was an equal care to her and the Regent. They both proposed to find her a highly-placed husband. The heir of Bridgewater House was much fancied and it was on

those stairs that she met the Regent for the last time. He was descending and stopped to speak a few words to "our dear little angel", while Mrs. Fitzherbert, preserving her mask, continued to ascend the stairs. They knew the art of cutting each other in the grand manner and the eyes of Society flashed upon them for the last time. They merely ignored each other and left that world, to which they had never communicated the circumstances of their union, to draw what conclusions they wished concerning their final and lasting separation.

Minny became the soul and solace of Mrs. Fitzherbert's life but she chose her husband for herself—a penniless younger son, George Dawson Damer. "George" seemed to be the fatal name in Mrs. Fitzherbert's life. To her infinite distress and the distant raging of the King the marriage was achieved. The romantic do not always approve romance in others. Not even a Peer! But the Earls Fortescue and Portarlington are descended from the marriage which Mrs. Fitzherbert failed to grace at St. George's, Hanover Square. A tiny note enclosing francs ("I wish I was able to make it thousands instead of hundreds") reached Minny in Paris to buy hats and bonnets. But all her jewellery was destined for the Dawson Damer. The King's chief interest was securing the nest-egg he had laid up for Minny from passing to the husband, who was rumoured spendthrift.

Mrs. Fitzherbert consoled herself by a tour in the Midlands, where she visited Grosvenors and Cavendishes as well as the home of the Fitzherberts whose name she had carried triumphantly through all obloquy. Thenceforward she settled down in Brighton as the Queen of Respectability. The last illness of the King brought her anxiously to Town. Minny had remained the only link and her girlish letters still passed conveying discreet sympathies "from the person in whose house I am now living". But in 1830 the King was dying in the arms of Lady Conyngham but under the attention of Sir Henry Halford, "the good physician," who also attended Mrs. Fitzherbert. Through Halford Mrs. Fitzherbert's last letter reached the dying King in spite of Lady Conyngham's vulture-like presence. Halford had sent Mrs. Fitzherbert the

true bulletin and prepared her for the worst. Lady Conyngham's influence had kept the King from Brighton during these years, dreading a reunion between the King and his wife. She had consulted Divines on the propriety of her remaining that winter at the King's couch and they had ruled that she had better stay in case her place was taken by a fresh scandal! By summer the end had come and Mrs. Fitzherbert's last letter of anxious love was given to the King to read and place under his pillow. But he was too weak to make reply or summons. The Great Summoner stood at the gates of Windsor.

In deep distress Mrs. Fitzherbert waited in her Tilney Street house hoping that she might be able to afford forgiveness in person, but in vain. At three of a June morning a friend, who had heard the great bell of St. Paul's toll, called at her house to inform her of her third widowship.

Mrs. Fitzherbert returned to Brighton which soon attracted the new King William of sailorlike memory. Very courteously he returned nine portraits of Mrs. Fitzherbert. There was a tenth which she highly prized, a diamonded miniature by Cosway, but this was buried with the King, round his neck. Bishop Carr had seen the miniature attached to a silver chain and the grim Duke of Wellington had ventured to open the spring. So Mrs. Fitzherbert felt consoled and unforgotten. In a manner the romance had lasted till death.

The new King immediately authorised Mrs. Fitzherbert's servants to wear mourning while the Conyngham and Hertford domestics were not permitted an inch of Royal crape. More was to come, when the King sent her an official invitation to the Pavilion. She replied inviting him to make the first call himself. She was then released from her marriage-promise and could show the King the document which made her his sister-in-law. With appropriate sentiment he burst into tears and offered her the title of Duchess which Fox had originally offered on the part of the Whigs. She refused what savoured of a "Duchess of Kendal" but accepted the weeds of a widow and the Royal livery for her servants.

The King also gave the livery to his illegitimate son by Mrs. Jordan, adding the Royal arms with the *baton sinister*.

SALUTATION TO FIVE

Poor Munster was desperately in love with Minny and the match was encouraged by the King: but as Mrs. Fitzherbert quietly remarked: "One is enough from that family!" The unfortunate Munster allowed Minny to make up his quarrels with the good-natured King and never ceased to haunt Mrs. Fitzherbert's house in Brighton and London until the day when he shot himself. It was Minny's birthday and a posthumous gift arrived: a clock with the date and her name-letters inscribed instead of the hours.

Henceforth life was very quiet for Mrs. Fitzherbert. Her Oratory had brought Mass to Brighton and charity amongst the destitute. It was a red letter day when word was received from her nephew Thomas Weld that he had been raised to the Cardinalate by Gregory XVI. She was putting her house in order and handed a sheaf of the Duke of Kent's letters to Minny. "And when I am gone, I wish you to offer them to Princess Victoria."

Two months after Mrs. Fitzherbert's death the great Queen came to the throne. The Pavillion was abandoned as a Royal residence and Brighton gradually became the Queen of the Cockneys, commoner and commoner. Few tourists have the taste to salute Chantrey's masterpiece of George IV in bronze. Fewer still visit the marble tomb in the Catholic Church where Mrs. Fitzherbert clasps hands for ever in prayer—with her three wedding rings extended towards the sanctuary.

POSTSCRIPT

At the last moment only has a document been found in the script of Minny's husband which clears up a number of details hitherto uncertain in biography.

Nov. 14, 1836.

Mrs. Fitzherbert told us this evening, that the first time she ever saw the Prince, was when she was driving with her husband Mr. Fitzherbert. They were in Park Lane, when he turned round and said: Look, there is the Prince! The second time was a few days subsequently when she was going with her husband to a Breakfast given by Mrs. Townley at Corney House, Chiswick (Lord Macartney's).

As they were turning down the Lane she perceived that the Prince had followed her and had stopped to look at her.

After Mr. Fitzherbert's death she lived a great deal with the late Lord Sefton who was her half-uncle, both the fathers being issue of the same mother. She was scarcely out of her weeds and unwilling to go out and be seen. He urged her to go to the Opera with him and she agreed on his consenting to her going in a cap and bonnet and a veil. She left the opera leaning on Henry Artan's arms and when at the door with her veil down waiting for her carriage the Prince came up to him and said: Who the devil is that pretty girl you have on your arm, Henry? The latter told the Prince who she was and then introduced the Prince to Mrs. Fitzherbert.

The Prince then appeared to have sought Mrs. Fitzherbert's society in all ways, and for this purpose gave a Supper. She went to it and seeing that she had attracted the attention of the Prince avoided going down to supper with him and took the arm of the Lord Chesterfield. All this occurred about the year 1780. The Prince then determined on giving a Ball at which she was to be the Queen, but she declined going to it and the Prince was so annoyed at this determination that when he found out that she did not intend to be present, he called his carriage and drove to Park Street in search of her. She did not let him in, being gone to bed. Her house was that one in Park Street at the corner of Hereford Street, now made into two or three, and it was there in the Dining Parlor that the marriage with the Prince subsequently was celebrated.

GEORGE DAWSON DAMER.

II

EDMOND WARRE

Edmond Warre, by C. R. L. Fletcher.

Fifty Years of Eton, by Hugh Macnaghten.

Changing Eton, by L. S. R. Byrne and E. L. Churchill.

Article in *The Dictionary of National Biography*, by H. E. Luxmoore.

MS. notes by Arthur Benson.

Personal Memories and Letters.

THE Victorian age produced a type of public servant, subject to immense public esteem and private hero-worship but quite unknown abroad. They were the great Head Masters from Thomas Arnold to Edmond Warre. Then the mould broke. Harrow, Uppingham and Loretto knew them.

Mr. Fletcher's *Life of Edmond Warre* is a mosaic of anecdotes, athletic triumphs and schoolboy distinctions amongst his pupils. It covers the hurly-burly of Eton history. It lacks the precision of Spy's famous caricature in *Vanity Fair* or the majesty of Sargent's canvas in School Hall. To see Warre steadily and see him whole, the reader must step down the corridors of Time. But however far he may step, the figure of Eton's greatest Head will not lessen.

Outside Eton, Warre had no personal history, though his voice and rumour reached the ends of the Empire. His whole life was wrapped in the School until he became Eton as much as Arnold was ever Rugby or Thring Uppingham. English Head Masters took their stature by him. To invite him to a Head Masters' Conference was like asking Jove to attend a Board meeting. As a boy he passed Newcastle

Scholar of 1854 to Balliol. After a trivial Fellowship of All Souls he returned to Eton for life.

Even as an Eton boy he created legends. He had exchanged one House for another because in his growing strength he had kicked down a wall. In later years it would have sufficed him to sit on one. A puny infant in childhood, he was on his way to become the colossus of Eton. As a fagmaster he fagged General Sir Redvers Buller. He sat in class with Swinburne, whose late arrivals at Early School with his red and tousled hair he compared to the rising sun. Swinburne did not write the particular kind of verses for which Eton was famous, and in any case Warre heartily disapproved of anything so sensitised as a poet. Poetry unto Prose in his eyes was as Cricket unto Rowing, not capable of heroics.

Hard work, hard living and hard rowing made Warre's ideal, to which he did not add a hard heart. His power was one of steady concentration which enabled him to win the first rank in scholarship without being a real scholar at all. The same power was turned upon rowing, the Volunteer Movement, the Classical Trireme, gardening, and above all upon the School curriculum, and always with the same surpassing results. Whatever subject he mastered, he put into visible practice and invariably experienced the divine happiness to find that it was good.

The inner life, the strange atmosphere of Public School, is never written, or if it leaks into the disguises of fiction, is overlooked with pretended horror. Schools pass through varying phases. These may be caused by different generations of boys but they can be severely fashioned by a strong Head. The Eton into which Warre had been thrown was morally rough and irreligious save for the routines of Chapel. At Oxford Warre was remembered as "aggressively moral". The time had come when the Selwyns and Lytteltons were reacting nobly against the low strain of schoolboy life. England was believed to be best ruled with a minimum of religious fuss or profession. Eton was content with the lowest common multiple, set out with good tone and uninquiring acceptance. The education offered at Eton sufficed for Squires who might develop into statesmen

and only needed the ready withal of Greek and Latin quotation in the House. Sixth Form cultivated a type of Bishop who was a gentleman first and could afford to smile or sigh on re-reading St. Paul's Greek. Discipline was supplied by the boys themselves, who fought with bare knuckles under the famous Wall. The influence of masters, moral or otherwise, was nil.

There had been a Commission and improvements were called for in education, not in religion, which kept on the low side of the Church. The Catholic revival at Oxford had upset the dim denizens of the Eton Cloisters like rumours of an approaching plague.

Houses were still conducted by extraordinary Dames out of the eighteenth century who kept a certain order tempered by ridicule. House Masters, if they behaved like gentlemen, could be successful, but some tolerated a form of Liberty Hall and more astonishingly still were tolerated themselves. The fates and characters of Etonians depended on the prevailing tone of each House. There were young bloods, who saw fair play and decency, but there were survivals from the Regency, the grandsons of the Bucks and Beaux of pre-Victorian days. Eton could be a cruel place and there were dark corners over which a veil was gracefully dropped. The headmastership of the flogging Keate was taken as a joke. His passions were unslackened by an elegant and beautiful wife and he flogged for any reason or no reason. False quantities could lead to the block, for Latin Verse was the white flower cherished and tended unto blood. The most famous story, retailed round the Empire, related to a Confirmation Class who were jestingly put on the flogging Bill. The astounded candidates for Grace received the Sacrament on the tip of the birch. But then Eton can survive any Head. After Keate came "lofty lavenderesque" Goodall. Then Hawtreay. Then Balston. Then Hornby.

From Oxford Warre descended like a fledgling Olympian upon Eton. He was well drawn at that time by George Richmond, a kind of pre-Raphaelite Sargent. The broad-shouldered Christian hero faced his rowdy world with the same personal beauty Richmond extracted from Newman.

But what a gulf lay between the sensitive mystic, whose fingers drew the bow across the violin at Oriel and Mr. Duty-before-Beauty, whose mighty hands had brought him to the Presidency of the Oxford Boat.

At Oxford Warre showed himself oarsman and soldier. It was his destiny to make Eton a great rowing school and as near a Military Academy as the Volunteer Movement allowed. At Oxford he was number One in the muster-roll of the Volunteers, a corps whose number 35 was the John Morley who left the Cabinet in 1914 rather than declare war on Germany. Apparently Warre's influence had not continued in his case. Another Volunteer who certainly slipped through his aggressive morality was J. A. Symonds, the aesthetic tempter of the coming generation. Symonds and Swinburne, Warre put outside the Pale. "Black is black and white is white" was the sentence he imposed upon himself and others. This may be correct in a school copy-book, but life is one bewildering tangle of shadows amid the silvers and of darkness upon the white of day. Of course what Warre meant was that he could not tolerate a third sex in thought or friendship any more than he could admit a fourth dimension into the teaching of Maths.

With these admirable ambitions he returned as a "temporary master" and was called upon to restore order in a House which had reached chaos. This House was under a benign Mr. Thackeray whose delicacy in Greek verse was an honour to Eton. Warre produced order in a week and was rewarded by being made permanent. This was in 1860 and exactly sixty years later he was buried in Eton. Such was his span. His first modest appearance as a Master appears in the Lists as "Edward Warre, B.A." [*sic*]

It was curious that Warre's career at Eton began and ended with the problem of wrestling with indecorous Houses. There was always a House worthy to be called Liberty Hall. But there were many excellent Houses and even their standard was raised when Warre became a House-Master. Warre used to grade the Houses as Battleships, Cruisers and Destroyers. He could not imagine a convict-ship amongst them, but he was suddenly confronted with ugly facts such as Thackeray's

under Head Master Balston and "Pecker" Rouse's under his successor Hornby. They were part of the school legend. Mr. Rouse's young gentlemen poached game from neighbouring coverts and lived like outlaws. Whenever one of their number was expelled, the others copied the dramatic custom of Execution days and hoisted a black flag, which generally flew for a week.

Warre's Head had been Hawtrey, an amiable eccentric, who dressed like a perfumed dancing master and carried his Classics as gracefully as his liquor. His successor Balston enters Eton annals as the predecessor of Hornby. Warre was given Balston's pupils, who also needed a little taming, and he should have taken over Balston's office as well. However, the languid, gentlemanly Hornby kept Warre from Sixth Form room until 1884. For two generations the combined efforts of Fellows and Head and Provost had been directed to postponing Reform. But with the dissolution of the impossible Fellows into what was called a Governing Body, the principal obstacles were cleared. Whatever that Body did, they did not govern, at least while Warre was Head. Their pompous styles and names were reminiscent of the stuffed titles by which Companies fortify the minds of their shareholders. No parent reading the names could fail to believe that his son would receive example worthy of a scholar and a gentleman.

But Victorian Eton neither professed nor attempted education. It was not wanted and even Warre was far from being an educator. He was an organiser, a militarist, an oarsman. His House, of course, was a splendid nursery of Governors, soldiers and County magnates. Parents judged House-Masters by the gossip in Clubs or Regiments and Warre's House was famous. His boys were swept forward by his mighty voice and towering presence. His moral character subdued the impertinent and ridiculed the scornful. His huge strength frightened the bully and chivied the loafer. He accepted a certain intellectual measure, but he believed first and foremost in the athletic safeguard. Hitherto games had been voluntary and unorganised. The whole House played for the House in a merry rout. Colours and Elevens now became distinguishable. Games became compulsory like

morals, depending on each other in the programme of muscular Christianity. Warre would not listen to a sneak nor act as a spy. He advertised his approach by tramping in heavy boots down creaky passages. Boys knew where he was and his trust was seldom abused. Of course his House was Number One.

Of Warre's physical strength, stories were told with wholesome effect. Once he had picked up two youths (one was Andrew Lang) and carried them under his arms over a Scottish Burn. While staying with Irish cousins at Tynan in Armagh, he performed a feat henceforth called "Warre's Leap". Shut out one evening, he cleared a five-bar gate that opened into a stony descent. For generations the oaken posts remained in testimony until one was thrown by an American lorry. But the greatest memory comes from the time of a Windsor election, which Hornby had forbidden the school to enjoy. In case the order was insufficient, a band of ushers, twelve or more, were placed on Windsor Bridge while Warre sauntered to Barnes Pool Bridge immediately under the College. For some hours Warre kept a boisterous mob at bay. The scions of "Young England" were jeering and jibing but not proceeding. Every rush was checked by Warre calling out the boys by name. Those were days when he knew every boy in the School. The day came when a visitor asked him if he still knew every boy. "No," was his famous reply as Head Master, "but every boy knows me."

When he had decided his duty on Barnes Pool Bridge was over, he walked away. Five minutes later twelve masters on Windsor Bridge were unable to emulate Horatius and a swarm of boys broke their ranks without difficulty.

In athletics Warre's House began to crush all opposition. Their only rival was the venerable family of Evans. Both Houses were sworn to blackball each other for entry into the sacred company of "Pop", the athletic Society which really ruled the school. When the two Houses met in the fierce match of 1873, Warre stepped out and angrily stopped the swearing and fouling with which both sides had disgraced the Field. Has any Eton Master ever dared hold up a match since? This was aggressive morality indeed.

By all accounts Warre was magnificent in his House but there were deficiencies. He encouraged scholars but the literati were unknown. He boasted all three Indian Governors at one time but there was never a Laureate or artist. He had no sympathy with queer or quaint boys. The unconventional was scorned and injustices could occur. One of his show pupils, Bill Beresford, V.C., remembered, and when passing Eton halted the Twelfth Lancers in order to tell Warre that he had him swished unjustly. Warre stood astonished and silent, for his repartee was limited.

Curiously enough, he disapproved of humour directed against himself. He asked his House to appoint delegates to the School Mission and they chose the least distinguished boy in the House. The Eton Mission, like the Volunteers and the Ten Commandments, was not a laughing matter, and like Queen Victoria, whom he revered on this side of idolatry, he was not amused. Nor was he amused when his Dame was "brozied" over a quarrel about jam puffs and the boys called insatiably for more. He could take a defeat but not a joke. If things went really wrong, he was puzzled in a humble sort of way.

As Major in the School Volunteers Warre figured in a series of famous Reviews. In the 'eighties Queen Victoria reviewed some 40,000 Volunteers in the Home Park. Before the Eton contingent reached the saluting base, Warre gave an indistinct command, which threw the boys into the kilted ranks of a Scottish regiment. The A.D.C.s, headed by Lord Wolseley, rushed to the rescue and separated them before they could proceed. On another occasion Warre gave so loud a command that his charger took fright and threw him heavily. Even so, his dignity was not impaired in the eyes of the boys. On a Field day, when there were guests, he served the boys with watered champagne, a truly British compromise.

On important matters Warre took sides and his side tended to win in the way that an avalanche is more powerful than a snowstorm. He stood for Rowing against Cricket because the oar called for nobler endurance. He stood for moderate reforms against the Diehards of the Foundation. He was Matthew Arnold's "Philistine" set over the governance of

Jerusalem. Against Culture, *Belles Lettres* or any of the Movements that moved ever so gently under the Victorian crust he was adamant.

It was against his wish or conscience that Shelley's bust was placed in Upper School, that William Morris lectured to the Upper Boys in a red tie and that Swinburne wrote the Eton Ode commemorating her 450th year. If he gave way on all these points it was with the reservation that "Black is black and white is white".

In 1887 the *Fortnightly Review* published English passages selected by living Men of Letters. Dr. Warre's selections may illustrate his taste. He chose from Shakespeare Claudio's speech on the horrors of death, Milton's "Hail Holy Light" from *Paradise Lost*, Tennyson's "Of old sat Freedom on the heights", a passage from the "judicious" Hooker, and Napier's account of the Fusiliers at Albuera.

The Philistines and the Aesthetes met in conflict under the rule of Hornby, whose attitude was expressed in one grim sentence: "I rather wish Shelley had been at Harrow!" Warre and Oscar Browning were the Protagonists. Browning despised games and read Dante to his boys. Warre made work creditable but Browning made it interesting. His House had some pretension to being an Academy compared with Warre's gladiatorial establishment. The clash came when Eton had to decide between two very different ways of running a House. Browning introduced Music and Modern History. He might as well have taught the boys to dance and knit, for the scorn he roused. When he took good-looking boys for drives, Hornby insulted him. Eton Masters timidly divided between Warre and Browning. But Hornby could not be impartial, such was his personal hatred. It was pointed out that Warre could row, Hornby could skate, both in the first class, but Browning could only tricycle! Hornby dismissed Browning, unfairly catching him through a joint in his harness. The cultural stream of Eton was turned or at least absorbed in the Thames for a generation.

It was as River Master that Warre took a lead unknown in English school-mastering. He consented to coach the Eight, but on the curious condition that the Captain invited him

on each occasion, so careful was he of usurping a power traditionally belonging to the boys. For a quarter century he coached the Eight and thereby influenced the Varsity boat race for the same period. He kept his own powers long enough. In 1865 he competed at Henley for the Goblets with another assistant Master under assumed names. It could not have been wholly approved in the sedate Cloisters, for a sermon was preached the following Sunday in Chapel on the wickedness of sailing under false colours!

His ideal was very very high. On one occasion he stopped the boat he was coaching and after an unusual silence he said: "This is the first time I have seen perfect rowing." And the vision apparently passed.

There is no doubt that he taught Rowing better than any other subject or than any other Coach. For hours he stood, rode or ran, teaching young oarsmen. He would spend an hour tubbing a pair in a gig. In mature age he wrote *The Grammar of Rowing*, profanely alluded to as God's Instructions to Noah. A famous caricature depicted Queen Victoria peeping out of Windsor Castle while Warre passed on the river and asking: "What is that terrible noise?" It might be added that the Queen approved of Dr. Warre as one of the safe supports of Empire. He was believed to be the only person who sang her a comic song in private. No amusement was recorded.

He created the traditions of "wet bobbery", leaving the cricket to "Mike", the corresponding instructor of dry-bobs. He finally obtained leave for the Eight to row at Henley from Hornby, who was also a man of the oar. This concession was made in exchange for an orgy called "Oppidan Dinner" and "Check-nights". The custom of drinking champagne on Rafts after School races continued well into Warre's Headmastership. Even so a Captain of the Boats had to act, for Warre hated abolishing tradition, even when boys became intoxicated.

Too late perhaps he became Head, but it was the signal for Eton to enter her zenith. In 1884 he received the symbolic birchrod from the Captain of the School elegantly tied with blue ribbons. Miss Evans' House was now without rival and Warre made the Cloisters Headquarters for his Draconian reforms.

The time had come to fulfil the words he had written at the outset of his Mastership: "I shall show God's work to this generation." Ten generations of boy life did not distinguish much between Warre's works and God's. There was no opposing it.

A School Office was created and occupied by old soldiers. A Book Pound was instituted. Annual Examinations were exchanged for Trials at the end of every Half. That Peers could be superannuated showed how deeply the great Reform Act of 1834 was still working.

Most alarmingly it was announced that the Head would inspect Divisions without notice. These visitations became a vivid feature of School life much to the humour of the retired Hornby. No boy could forget the scene when a creaking door swung open and a black-robed giant advanced to the desk. Boys staggered to attention. Masters became incoherent and wiped away their sweat with blotting paper. The booming voice, with which the Head sought to reassure the startled boys, only increased the panic. Boys set to construe, stuttered or broke down. In the end the Head took the lesson, made one of his famous quotations, and passed on his tremendous way. Masters with presence of mind switched him to one of his classical fads: the raft of Odysseus or the propulsion of Triremes, for there were "wet-bobs" in the Classics if not in the Scriptures.

Arthur Benson once described such a visitation during a class for Lysias: "I had been girding at the attenuated stuff and he began praising it for its beauty and interest. He made a little speech about good taste in writing, avoidance of humour, often offensive, 'there, put your pen through it'. He spoke of his own sermons and how after writing a few pages a horror came over him (I don't wonder) and he struck it all out. His greatness gleamed through the loose and inconsequent talk, rambling metaphors, rapid quotations, quite unintelligible to the boys, like tongues of fire through smoke. He roared so loud once or twice that the room rang."

He made a point of visiting French classes where the tactful Frenchmen in charge were adepts in disguising that

his scholarship was better than his accent. Monsieur Hua was a favourite with boys, who understood he told French stories to King Edward, which were not retailed in class. As French hours were generally used for preparing work for Classical Masters, Warre retaliated by making Classical Masters teach an hour of French every week. He dropped the teacher of Hebrew after 1885 though a Hebrew class was becoming possible to recruit. It was a false supposition that the Semitic specialist became a chaplain at Harrow. Signor de Asarta taught Italian throughout the Warre régime but unfortunately was not known by sight. Whereas the plump and pompous Herr Ploetz was famous for spats and scholarship, and could certainly teach. Warre brought in Mr. Byrne and under cheerful Englishmen modern languages received respect instead of resistance.

Once it was allowed that the sons of gentlemen should learn Science, every effort was made to introduce the modern Laboratory. Dr. Porter taught a rather exciting Department on his own. He used certain experiments for instilling fear in his pupils. Lower boys were once told that he had raised a dead cat to life with a battery. Upper boys were shown a glass of colourless liquid and told that if it fell to the ground—the whole of Eton would disappear in atoms. One fine day, according to Arthur Benson, it tipped over and Dr. Porter, who was also a clergyman, fell on his knees and recited a Collect. This was a Class the Head never ventured to visit. “Ah yes, but that is Science and I know no Science.”

One change was marked by boys for the good. The floggings were reduced in number and quality. Disdaining to use his god-like strength on naked urchins, he merely combed them with the birch, while the gowned praepostors held them down and elevated their vesture in the traditional manner.

Masters themselves were given rules and discouraged from smoking. They were to consider themselves always on duty but espionage was forbidden.

Warre found more opposition in Sixth Form than amongst Masters. Without any subtlety of wit or love of classical shades, he suffered in comparison with Hornby, who delighted his pupils with the quips and phrases worthy of a more

civilised century. Warre's heavy instructions were received with yawning contempt. His teaching was "weighty rather than inspiring". Guileless and conscientious, he gave information in School with the same straightforwardness which was so successful on the River. Even in his last years the Sixth Form kept a book labelled "The Wisdom of Warre" and a boy, turned out of Sixth Form for apparent irreverence, did not care to explain that it was Warre and not the Deity he was mocking. Realising that all was not smooth going, he called in Hugh Macnaghten and the Sixth glimpsed Euripides and Sophocles from an inspired scholar. The Head carried on with Livy. A great commander knows how to use his deputies in the field.

His favourite Captain of the School recorded:

"He had far too much on his hands and could not see the wrong in some of his Houses. He always used to say to me: 'Blessed are the Pure in Heart', and called me his *facile princeps* Captain of the School (excuse blowing of trumpets) and in his house, alone with him, I have seen him cry, for he loved Eton and knew in his ageing tread and failing abilities that the job was too big for him!

"'I will *not* allow this filthy habit of smoking! It's bad for yeh morally and physically too, so to speak. Dea'nt yeh want to be healthy, fine-blooded Englishmen? Not like those pale-faced French boys with their sneaky ways and sniggering manners!' All this was followed by a loud gallumph and a rolling of his tongue and a moment of wise pondering." Like all great men he was easier to mimic than to imitate.

It was said that four words summarised his teaching on any subject: *chimaera bombinans in vacuo*! He was a singular combination of the magnificent and the ridiculous, and the nearer boys got to him, the less magnificent and the more ridiculous did he appear: yet the Masters for all his absurdity respected the man, if not his judgment, and were devoted to him. It was said that if he was not a great man, he was a great gentleman.

His greatest test was when he had to decide whether the son of a great Minister of State should be expelled or not. This actually had occurred under a predecessor. But Warre

gave the benefit of the doubt and no one could say if he was right or wrong.

Jubilee year brought up the really great question whether the Eton and Harrow Match should occupy three days instead of two. With the years it had become as important as the Boatrace and as glittering as Ascot. A Petition in favour of three days was signed by eight Old Etonian Presidents of the M.C.C. The Harrow Head was not unfavourable, but Warre refused to be cornered and during some blundersome correspondence in *The Times* he complained that "the turn thus given to the question is to throw without notice publicly in time of excitement the onus of deciding it on the shoulders of the Head Master of Eton". They were broad enough in all conscience, but they were the shoulders of a rowing man. The ponderous decision was rolled forth:

"It should be remembered Eton is very differently situated from Harrow. We have our annual match with Winchester. We have Henley Regatta. Whatever may be best for cricket may not necessarily be best for the School."

"Mike" and the M.C.C. Presidents were scattered like chaff.

The Book of "The Wisdom of Warre" was kept by Sir Stephen Gaselee, John Capron, Chris Stone, Robin Quirk and others. They delighted in his West Country accent—"Kum, Kum, boys! when you begin to think of the negative side of Zero, you are, so to speak, lost in the abyss of Infinity". Perhaps he was right.

He was an odd mixture of granite and humility, for he was reproachful of himself, when he found a Sixth Former had scribbled to his neighbours: "Can you stand this stuff?" Apparently not.

It was no use defending the Bible with the old Oxford thought. Mrs. Humphrey Ward's son was high in the Sixth when he referred approvingly of the Tübingen School and dared to quote Weiszäcker. He was summoned to the Head, who spoke sternly and rather angrily, asking why Eton should go to German Theology. As for Weiszäcker—"they're all wise acres" was his concluding and perhaps unanswerable shot.

It was no wonder that recruits for the Church began to

diminish. In a certain sense Warre's whole régime was unclerical. The test was that Monday military exercises were taken out of Chapel not School time. The music in Chapel was of the best village-concert style with Anthems sung by a hired choir. The Sermons were safe, Sundayish and sometimes insufferable. Arthur Benson described Confirmation as a huge garden-party faintly overshadowed by a sense of religion.

The 'eighties and the 'nineties proved Warre's golden era. He reigned, ruled and enriched Eton life. The Volunteers, literally "Dr. Warre's own", flourished. The Eight almost appropriated the Ladies Plate at Henley. Eton rapidly approached the thousand mark. Royalty beamed. The Queen deigned to open the Schools called after herself. It was a return visit for the glamorous torchlight procession, which Warre organised for her first Jubilee, a year which also covered his natal fiftieth. The thoughts of both personages seemed to dwell upon each other at times and the Head even dreamed the words and tune, which the boys sang at the Castle. The Queen was overjoyed and Warre became a Royal Chaplain. In 1901 the Queen died and for the last time Warre marshalled the boys in her honour.

By the new century Eton had become Dr. Warre's Academy rather than King Henry's Foundation. He had thought and wrought and as far as possible taught the School into his own image. Eton was now wholly athletic and semi-military. All aestheticism was chivied out of the ranks. Any un-English movement from Ritualism to Vegetarianism had been suppressed. The Eton Society was no longer intellectual and would no doubt have blackballed Mr. Gladstone had he returned. "Pop" wore gala clothes and ruled the rest of the School by sheer force. They exhibited the last flicker of the Regency Corinthians.

The great difference in taste between Warre's and the present day can be judged from the programme of "Speeches" delivered by the boys. The modern has intruded on the Classical. Even Browning (no relation of Oscar) was not sanctioned except the ridiculous rant about bringing the *Good News From Ghent*. As for the *Ring and the Book*, it was clearly putting ideas into the boys' heads.

In a famous metaphor delivered in a speech to the Masters Warre advised keeping a tight hand as long as the rein was fairly loose. This was variously interpreted, including the suggestion that Warre did not mind them being tight as long as they avoided looseness! Some of the Masters punished themselves for their own subserviency by jesting against Warre. There broke forth a Lilliputian warfare amongst the Staff, between the Classical and more Modern. The *Battle of the Books* was refought chiefly over Greek. Warre's dilemma was that though by Grace he was a die-hard Classic, he had created Army Class which had dropped Greek. He had militarised Eton and he could not die in both trenches. Times were slightly tumultuous and he had better have retired. He had a good chance in 1896 when doctors insisted on his taking a rest, but he only gave up Early School. Again in 1900 he might have departed in an aureole of glory. He declined a hint from the Eton Premier Lord Salisbury who offered him the Deanery of that name. In fact there was no moving him though his mighty rowing heart was weakening. He had worn himself out in sleepless supervision of the School. Unending concentration had loosened the mighty fibres. He could be upset and he showed timidity in face of letters in the Press, even in face of the Paterfamilias bogey. He could no longer close controversies with an apt quotation. Ushers did not stop quarrelling when a huge but beautiful hand was laid on their shoulders and the words "Blessed are the Peacemakers" softly boomed in their ears.

Who was to tell Warre that Eton could continue without him, and perhaps better? The School seemed to enjoy singing the hymn: "When War shall be no more", though seriously they would have kept him for ever. Something of the kind overcame the Conducts (who curiously enough conduct service) and the Head's favourite hymn was substituted:

"Come, O Thou Traveller unknown,
Whom still I hold but cannot see,
My company before is gone
And I am left alone with Thee."

This was quite true of the old man, whose splendid company

of assistants were going or gone: Arthur Ainger, Edward Austen-Leigh ("the Flea"), "Badger" Hale, Walter Durnford, "Mike", Henry Luxmoore. With two or three exceptions there were never such wonderful Houses.

Latterly he was rumoured to be seeking a successor. His mantle was waved first towards Arthur Benson and later towards Francis Rawlins. He suggested Holy Orders to Benson as a first step to the swishing block, but that exquisite writer was thrown by the fluttering of the Holy Dove into a melancholia from which he never entirely recovered. Neither was eventually chosen and the Governing Body produced the real candidate, a Lyttelton who had once captained Miss Evans' hated House. Such can be the whirligigs of Time!

The old man stayed into the new Reign, which was auspicious enough. The new King visited the Royal Foundation in a Royal Barge as though in recognition of a rowing Head. But Fate had reserved him severe thrusts which only a younger man could have borne. For his peace and happiness he had better have retired when the going was good and the future like his mystical fellow-traveller—unknown.

Warre continued like some permanent monument on the Eton scene. Visitors and old boys looked for his stalwart figure in the way that they pointed out the Wall, Founder's Statue or the Crimean Cannon in front of the New Schools. The boys even accepted his over-audible sermons. They were stiff, uninspiring and rather tedious, but that booming voice! It alarmed and yet it lulled. Who that ever heard him thunder the Commination Service in Chapel could forget—"Cursed is he that removeth his neighbour's landmark"—surely a thrust at Mr. Gladstone's politics. As for the Ten Commandments—listeners could recall echoes down the years, especially of the divine injunction upon the most human of frailties. It was like the voice from Sinai.

He had his favourite texts: "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem (assistant masters, stop quarrelling!—for Jerusalem and Eton were one). They shall prosper that love thee" (this was a thought for the Eton Mission and the old Etonian Association which marked his reign). He hardly

knew his immense power over the boys, who could be influenced deeply for life without ever contacting him. They listened attentively to his Sermons like recruits on parade but could dislocate few aphorisms from the steady resonance. Once he called out to the astounded boys: "Clear the water and keep your feather low"! This was a hint to avoid swagger. There was a memorable sermon in Lower Chapel, which neither boy, Master nor Dame could interpret. Some feared he was breaking down. "I was afraid he would never leave off," grunted the Lower Master. But listening to Warre was like listening to the mounting murmur of Mass in a Cathedral distance. Reverence he always obtained, for the boys believed he could do no wrong.

Warre was more effective speaking outside the pulpit. In Chapel, with his gold-rimmed spectacles and lifted head, he resembled a blinded eagle feeling rather helplessly around. But when he faced a moral question face to face with the School, his voice cleared and his eyes flashed. Who could ever forget when Fifth and Sixth were summoned to Upper School? On one occasion there was a rather ridiculous row. A boy was expelled and there was a minor demonstration when the departing cab drove to the station. Some two hundred boys filled Keate's Lane. A bouquet was lowered from a top window and the departure was softened by confetti and cheers. A mild riot was cleared up by "Pop" with their canes. It need have gone no further, but Warre believed the School had condoned what came under his "Black is black" formula. He spoke words as terrible as ever Moses addressed to the Children of Israel. The School was frightened and even Masters became nervous. They were to understand that those who had cheered had done Eton more harm than they could ever retrieve! That speech of Warre was remembered by very different boys when the rest of their Eton lives grew dim. Grizzled veterans would meet behind the Pavilion at Lord's and murmur:

"Do you remember the — row?"

"I still quake in my boots when I think of the Head in Upper School."

It was amusing to boys to watch Generals and Ministers

standing beside him on the Fourth of June with their hats off. He liked to be kindly, but that voice was so terrifying that it could be believed that he might have been a successful lion-tamer.

On a later occasion the School was summoned to a happier scene. In Lent 1902 the keyholes of classrooms had been filled with plaster of Paris before Trials. Warre angrily stopped all Leave until the guilty surrendered. Weeks and weeks passed until "Pop" gave him their word as gentlemen that the guilty were no longer members of the School. The School was summoned and Leave publicly restored. There was a scene of stupendous enthusiasm. It was one of those moments when everyone wished to die for him.

Incidentally the Head congratulated the School that no one had "sneaked" on this occasion. He never allowed Masters to practise espionage. He believed that his own tremendous moral influence was sufficient. He made men House Masters and gave them as complete liberty as Colonial Governors in their spheres. They must manage to rule without informers. Some Masters held that a danger to morals was the exception, but on this point boys were most sensitive, for such cases involved expulsion.

House Masters did not always carry out the Head's regulations and suggestions. He had been urgent about fire drills, but nothing had been done by anybody. Boys slept in rickety old warrens behind iron bars. The inevitable might have been delayed a century, but it came when a mental incendiary among the boys fired Mr. Kindersley's House in 1903. Two boys perished in the trap. The blow fell heavily upon the Head's shoulders. It is doubtful if he ever spent another happy day at Eton. He was too crushed to attend the Inquest held upon the dead boys laid out pitifully in their Pupil-room. The wife of the Vice-Provost, Mrs. Cornish, provided the flowers. Fire-reform naturally followed at Eton and at every Public School which caught alarm in the land.

Consolation, if any, came in these darkening days with the buildings which sprang up to mark his career. Already the quaint landscape of Eton had been considerably changed. Queen's Schools, the Lower Chapel, Mechanics School, which

was ahead of the times, the Drill Hall, the big new Houses on the road to Eton Wick. These last were certainly of the type that Mrs. Cornish called the "Sanitary linoleum School". As a visible climax to Warre's career came the great Memorial Hall to the South African dead. The Boer War had justified Warre in many ways. It had been an Old Etonian war, comparing lists with all other Schools. The stone was solemnly laid and three years later a dome of mushroom Renaissance was raised in company with a Library in cheerful bad taste. It was unfortunately spared by the German bombers who later wrecked the exquisite Upper School. It remained Warre's monument and at least had been capable of containing his mighty voice. Like all the buildings he erected it might have been so much better—and so much worse.

In 1904 Warre proposed a new set of changes in the School life, but Provost and Fellows pulled themselves together and advised him to leave them to his successor. "Dr. Warre was deeply moved. He wrote a letter resigning his position and announced in Chambers that he had done so. If I am standing in the way of the good of the School, he said, it is time for me to go."

But still he held motionless to the helm. He seemed more withdrawn than ever. He was still the only possible Head and the Staff were more or less tail. He seemed buoyed by his great past. He looked into a boy's face and recalled his father. Sometimes he stared stonily in an old pupil's face and failed of the name.

Much is omitted from the history of Schools and therefore from the lives of Head Masters. The liberty which Warre gave to his House Masters was sometimes abused and several unsatisfactory Houses were taken as a matter of course. If a boy was lucky, he found himself at a brilliant House like Miss Evans' or Macnaghten's. If he was unlucky, he could be very unlucky indeed.

The blows came rather unexpectedly. The House, which nearly ten years previously had been the cause of the Head's memorable expostulation in Upper School, came under his notice owing to a parent's letter. The parent was a Peer. The Head relieved the Master of his House. The Master was popular (too popular perhaps) with his pupils and a

number of them at Cambridge signed an indignant protest. They pointed out that the Head was retaining in his service the Master of a House far less worthy. The Head was moved to answer the rather impudent letter and to refer his young correspondents to the account he would give on the Day of Judgment. But they were right, for a stern parent (a Baronet this time) shortly took action and another House was dissolved in disgrace. Even its House Colours were never revived by another, which was a unique happening in history.

Warre's biographer discerned an "intermittent series of shocks" affecting his health in those last unnecessary years. These troubles more than the disastrous Fire lowered his spirit. He felt he had been wounded in the House of trusted friends. No doubt he hated iniquity but he also hated removing an established House-Master. Perhaps, if there had been a little honest "sneaking", his grey head would have descended more happily towards the grave. Better still, if he could have visitated Houses in the same way that he appeared in Classes. But alas he had never made the attempt.

A survivor of this less worthy House, afterwards a First at Oxford, has written: "The general impression of misery and injustice is indelible and I cannot forgive those who allowed these conditions to go on. Also probably Warre thought it was a good House. What was there behind that notable presence? More modesty and humbleness and less intellect and perception than one would suppose. He was Head during a bad time in our social history and his liberty of action was curtailed. I think he had a wooden mind. But he was just, kindly and honest."

Esmé Wingfield-Stratford, a Fellow of King's albeit an old Etonian (so much have times changed), sketched him at his best: "His magnificent presence enhanced by his billowing gown, reading Absence in School Yard, must in itself have been no inconsiderable asset to the School . . . He was just what you imagine John Bull might have been minus his fat. And I can never think of Warre without being reminded of what Mazzini once said after a visit to the Zoo—Have you noticed the face of a lion? Do you not think it is a very foolish face? Well, that is Garibaldi's."

Wingfield-Stratford, like most of the School of 1900, realised the sinister side: "It was characteristic of Warre that he should also have continued to avert his eyes from the sadistic orgies that were part of the regular routine in not a few of the Houses under his suzerainty."

It seems ungenerous to saddle Warre's memory with the legend of Houses which only unbelievable carelessness could have overlooked. He had made Eton richer in every way—in work and play—as a builder, an organiser. By sheer prestige he had imposed the ideals of Christian gentlemen. Scholars in College, oarsmen in the Boats, the Eton Volunteers, the Eton Mission, athletics and foreign languages flourished under his touch. History could only record the rosy and golden—but does true History prefer to omit the darker side? Nor was there more than a black patch, which could scarcely be believed in later and happier days when Houses reach the same good level. In that case let the blame rest on a nameless House-Master, a survivor of whose House writing to the author remembers "the unhappiest years of my life which we spent together. I believe Mr. — was probably a harmless individual but I think that quite a few of our contemporaries, who have gone under, might have survived, had he never been an Eton Housemaster. I know it took me quite a few years to live down the stigma of having been at — the worst House there has ever been at Eton. By the law of averages there *must* have been a fair proportion of normal 'good fellows' in that House. I can't remember one I ever wish to see again. What *was* wrong that he and that incredible woman managed to produce such an appalling crowd of young hooligans as we all were? We weren't even healthy savages. You were always older than your years. You kept your head, bloody at times but unbowed. I shall never forget the quite incredible change which came in my life when I was taken away. I suppose we knew ourselves to be pariahs and hanged ourselves on the bad name that had been given us. The present generation just won't believe you. For indeed a true story of Mr. —'s in our time would rival any 'Borstal Nights' which could ever be written."

So writes a Colonel of the Guards who later met his principal

torturer attached as a probationer. There were no happy meetings in after life between boys. Another grim meeting occurred when L—— *minor* found himself inspecting a particularly hated character attached to the Rifle Brigade. The British Army brought such to justice and standards of decency. And the rest is silence.

It was the brutality rather than the morality which shocked, as when two Houses competed as to which could claim the record for "smacking" the unlucky fags. Two future Varsity oarsmen could attribute their firm seats in the boat to their weekly thrashings at ——'s House. One found a soldier's grave after being Captain of the Cambridge Boat. To the writer he assigned his "bottom of tin" to his treatment by a sadist fagmaster but he added, "It set me rowing!" It was no House for weaklings where such inclinations as attending Holy Communion, reading the *Spectator* or collecting wild flowers were treated with unmannerly contempt. Canings in those days were divided into those which made blood ooze through the trousers or not!

Even an attempted suicide did not warn the authorities; but when the crash came, Warre took no excuse and made no exceptions. There was an end of that House and Eton sighed her relief. It is pleasant to think that, when the sons of Labour enter the Eton ranks, they will find such unpleasant conditions entirely removed. Only Squires' sons could have stood what we stood between 1900 and 1904.

No book of Eton Memoirs will lack a portrait of Warre, whether written by Masters or boys. They all accumulate to his praise and honour and it is well that the memory of old unhappy things should drift away. Parents must not dream that such things are possible in these days. In fact they may send their children to Eton or Roedean with equal confidence in the propriety and kindness they will meet.

And again, let not Warre be wholly blamed for everything that occurred at Warre's Eton. An Admiral depends on his Captains for the discipline and morality of the ships: and may depend in vain.

In one respect it was a pity Warre did not influence the Victorian youth and that was in his love of gardening and

Botany. He delighted in talking to a Botany class which he could illuminate with Classical allusions. He loved to play with the leaves of the Sensitive Plant though sensitive boys hardly seemed to him to exist. Perhaps *Mimosa pudica* would have made the botanical equivalent of a certain type of boy, but the majority of Etonians in his reign could be likened to hardwoods and hardy shrubs.

We are told officially that "he remained at his post too long". But at last the end came and with the end came his last School. There is always something moving in such a moment. Gladstone's last minutes in the House of Commons have been dramatically recorded by John Morley. Lord Clifden remembered Warre's last School. It was a Saying Lesson. "I was the last boy to come up and say my piece and therefore found myself alone with him. When I had done it, he shut the book and said these words: *Finis laborum meorum*. It was a terribly impressive moment and I would have given anything in the world to have made a suitable reply, preferably in Latin, as I stood there representing all the thousands that the dear old man had benefited." His own words were upon him for the time had come to shoulder his pack and go.

Whatever his private griefs and shocks, Warre retired in 1905 mantled with public esteem. He soon returned as Provost, Hornby having once more kept him waiting too long. It would have been more convenient for Eton if he could have become Provost in 1900. As things were, he was soon crippled and the boys visioned him in a bath chair. The mighty physique defied the advance of age or even Death. It was not till 1920 that he met the Unknown Traveller of his dreams.

When he died, it seemed difficult to conceive that his greatness had been achieved in so small a world. But all who ever came under his influence felt assured that he could have repeated that same greatness with unswerving simplicity whether he had gone to Canterbury or the Woolsack or the Throne of the Moguls. And in each place his Classical quotations would have been appropriate.

Four Head Masters have succeeded Warre, chosen by the

Governing Body as carefully as Popes are chosen by a more sacred College. Their names have not passed like Warre's into the history of England. It would be interesting, if at the ceremony of induction a famous warning, which is uttered to new Popes, were paralleled at Eton. "*Non videbis annos Petri*" Popes are told; and each new Head Master should be solemnly informed in Chapel (perhaps as an anthem), "Thou wilt not see the times of Warre!"

He was buried in that forgotten corner of Eton which holds so many dead Dominies, Dames and worthies of Eton. Miss Evans lies near by where her boys left her in peace. But the great grave is Warre's.

There is a tradition that the Irish will enjoy the privilege to be judged by St. Patrick in person on the Last Day. It would be a happy thought on the part of the Eternal to allow the last Eton Absence to be read by Edmond Warre, for on that tremendous Day his voice for once would not be frightening.

III

SIR WILLIAM BUTLER

Sir William Butler's *Autobiography*

The Milner Papers—Headlam

The Life of Joseph Chamberlain, by J. L. Garvin

THE names of most of the British Generals engaged in the Boer War have met merciful oblivion. The name which the Boers respect and remember longest will be Lieut.-General Sir William Butler. Not only did he take no part in the disastrous fighting, but had he had his will, there would have been no fighting at all.

William Butler was born in Ballyslateen, in the County of Tipperary, in 1838, part of what was called in the old maps "Butler's County", for his family was descended from James ninth Earl of Ormond, who died in 1546. A great deal can be garnered from his *Autobiography*. It would be difficult to say which weapon showed him the more Irish: pen or sword. He had a devastating sense of irony, a love of old-fashioned punning and word-play and a sense of the historical past, which he investigated entirely without the use of text-books.

He remembered visiting Richmond Penitentiary as a child, where a very impenitent and burly figure swayed him in his arms, while the most famous and melodious voice in Europe hurrahed for Tipperary! "The big man was Daniel O'Connell and the time must have been in the June of 1844." Butler cherished such memories from the past, but his next experiences were not so hilarious: the Irish Famine and the slow noiseless slaughter of "the finest peasantry in the world". As an old soldier he added afterthoughts to a schoolboy's, whatever they were in the 'forties. "A second

or third-rate despot could have at least parried the blow; but a constitutional government face to face with a sudden crisis is as helpless as a stranded whale in an ebb-tide."

He watched the evictions at their worst and his mentality was marked for life. Henceforth a peasant or a farmer was God's best, and whoever struck the man with the hoe had struck God's plan for the world. In days to come he married Elizabeth Thompson, the famous painter of the Roll Call, and at his inspiration she painted an eviction scene which is now cherished by the Irish Nation.

The young Ensign of the Sixty Ninth was posted to the East. The old Army had perished in the Crimea and Butler could only find a few survivors of those "whose charging shouts had been heard on fifty European and Asiatic battle-fields. More than half of them were Irish, no matter what might be the title borne by the regiment to which they belonged."

The old Colonel died soon after Butler's arrival in India, while endeavouring to shout one of those complicated commands devised at Whitehall without thought of hot climates. The words were still those for wielding the flintlocks, the Brown Bess of the Peninsular War. Butler himself lived into the more civilised era of the Gatling and the Maxim.

As for the voyage in an old Trooper, "there was no Plimsoll in those days" and the leaking ship only survived by keeping the angry soldiers at the pumps.

A life of experience sharpened his pen. Could Conrad or Stevenson have described the horrors of a Hurricane better than this paragraph?—

"There is no sea and no sky and no air. They have all become one vast, blank, solid, gigantic animal, compared to which the lion is a lamb, the whale a minnow, the biggest cannon a child's popgun. There is no sea running as in an ordinary storm; beneath this awful wind the sea crouches for a time like a lashed hound; and that is exactly what it is. It cannot get up and run before that vast wall of wind. It lies down at first and the wind mows it like grass, shaves it off in swathes of white foam, which are caught up into the rushing wind itself, so that no eye can open against it, and no

face can face its saltness. But the roar is the thing that lives longest in memory; it seems to swallow even the thunder, as though that too, like the sea, had been brayed into it."

Here was a power of description and outlet to his turbulent Celtic soul, which helped him through many a reverse and difficulty. Life, even when it struck with hurricane force, was always interesting. When the Present became disappointing or odious, his curiosity delighted in the Past. Links, living links were his hobby. In the old Fort at Vellore he found a survivor of the Battle of the Nile. "What was it like? Well, it was like the sound of the waterwheel of a big mill."

That was all, but he had better luck at St. Helena, where he found an old Irish soldier, who had guarded the Emperor himself. He could point where the sentries were placed below the ridge by day and drawn close to Longwood by night. This old Irishman had seen the Emperor working in the garden or feeding fish in the pond. He had even entered the house in charge of the Chinamen who fetched the water from the spring. He remembered the big wind tearing up the trees the night before the Emperor died: "the awfulest wind that was ever on the island". Was it sent by the same power that carried away the soul of Cromwell in a mighty raging gale?

Was it an irony of fate that Irish soldiers stood sentinel over the dying Emperor and over his tomb? Had he brought his Armies to Ireland instead of Russia, perhaps he would not have languished in the dead gullies of St. Helena. It was a Sergeant Sullivan who stood over the dismembered body and with his bayonet prevented a rat removing the Imperial heart! But what a superb compliment the British paid to their old enemy when soldiers took turn to watch, day and night, lest the dreaded one should rise from the grave. Pilate ordered the same precautions. "Had there been no St. Helena there might have been no Second Empire," ruminated Butler.

Whenever he had a chance to slip off a Trooper, he paid pilgrimage to the empty tomb at Longwood where he knew so well "the dark cypress trees, the broken willow, the iron

railings, the big white flagstone in the centre of the railed space—all the lonely encompassing lava hills merging into the gathering gloom of night; and only a yellow streak of afterglow to make the profound depths of this valley seem more measureless”.

On his return to England he devoured old books of battles and far forgotten things. There were no wars on hand and he set out to tramp the old Flemish battlefields from Fontenoy to Waterloo. He was fifty years away from Waterloo. It was not till 1909 that he wrote: “We are not yet one hundred years from Waterloo. It is quite possible that there are thoughtful people in England today, who are not quite so keen as their fathers were upon the leg-up on the high horse of Europe which we gave Germany in that memorable campaign.”

Butler served in the good old days of promotion by Purchase and had himself “been five or six times purchased over” by junior officers. The Barracks and military life at home presented no interest. He dashed to find excitement in any corner of the world, such as Canada for service during the Fenian raid. It was a chance of exploring the unknown latitudes he afterwards described in *The Great Lone Land*. He dashed to Paris in time to see the surrender of followers of the Commune. In the *Autobiography* he gave a glimpse of a wounded, defiant woman going with hands bound in a cart to execution: a kind of reparation for Marie Antoinette in her tumbril.

In his Irish home or the dingy red-brick barrack at Chatham he wrote about the immense lonely spaces he had crossed on foot in Canada and which few eyes had ever seen before. Thanks to memory he relived his endurances in the Canadian wastes and wrote out those distant scenes in a manner that called the attention of the authorities: an attention which could not be purchased. The gift of remembering is a very soldierly quality. Well might he write:

“What an infinite blessing is the mystery of memory! No possession or instinct belonging to man can touch that single gift—to look back, to remember, to be young when you are old, to see the dead; to have ways of escape, to be free, all

this out of Memory. Surely this was the breath of Life breathed into the brain of man when God gave him a living soul." And so through life he cherished historical dreaming and travelling recollections: book-writing and every chance he could take to make a new expedition or dash into the unexplored. He could not afford, perhaps did not relish, the home-sports of the Victorian officer. When he was refused for service on an expedition setting out to find Livingstone, he returned to the Canadian unknown. From the Arctic snows he passed to the torrid sands of Africa, when the young soldier crossed swords with the formidable historian Froude.

Naturally, on Irish and Catholic matters the great historian thought Butler fair game and chaffed him in company over a "Winking Virgin" in Madeira. The answer came slap and unexpected: the young Irishman had seen so many winking ladies in England that the sight was no novelty. One on the Saxon! The Butlers had suffered the Penal Laws, and when touched, the young soldier could defend the Old Faith.

When his travels had reached print, his light could be hid no longer and a man of deciding character entered his life. General Sir Garnet Wolseley summoned him to accompany him on a series of African adventures. Butler found him the ideal soldier "on whom command sat so easily and fitly that neither he nor the men he commanded had ever to think about it". He sketched the "broad and lofty forehead over which brown chestnut hair closely curled: sharp, penetratingly blue eyes". This was the unfailingly successful General in whom Queen and Army and public delighted. Butler's description is not far different from his sketch of another of his military heroes, General Gordon: "I never saw thought expressed so clearly in any other man's eyes. Above these windows of his soul rose a fine broad brow, over which a mass of curly brown hair . . ."

Later Butler wrote the Lives of Colley and Gordon who both died tragically under Africa's uncompassionate skies. His Life of General Napier was so successful that he was asked to write Marlborough's in a series. At first he was all afire but when he found that the magnificent soldier was not an

honest man, he surrendered the task to Wolseley who had the good luck to be given access to the archives at Blenheim.

Half the happiness of his life came from his heroes: Napoleon in the past and in the present Wolseley, Gordon, Colley and, thanks to his Irish Nationalism, Parnell. They were men indeed. Upon them he made his meditations and his writing. If he ever had the leisure, he intended to give his masterpiece to Napoleon. For his strategy in the Waterloo campaign he had an immense admiration. If Butler had been in the place of Ney, perhaps the Great Captain would not have been defeated. Sarcastically he recorded "that vast force of about a million men which those brave fellows, the Kings and Emperors of Europe, had gathered round the French frontiers to fight the single soldier whose army two months earlier had numbered a bare five hundred all told".

The death of the Prince Imperial moved him more deeply than he could ever say. The representative of his hero—Napoleon the Great—the combination of the warrior dynasty with the white flower of youth—and the hopeless blot left on the escutcheon of England by his abandonment to the assegais of the Zulus.

As fate ordained, Butler was posted at Durban and he collected the funds to make the funeral passage honourable:

" . . . the saddest but the most impressive sight I had ever witnessed. It was the sunset hour; the Eastern slope of the Berea was in shadow but the town beneath, the ships in the roadstead and the deep blue Indian Ocean beyond the white line of shore were all in dazzling light. The Regiments that had gone up country had left their bands on the coast, and one after the other, these took up the great March of the Dead, until the twilight, moving Eastward towards the sea, seemed to be marching with us as we went. Night had all but closed when we carried the coffin into the little Catholic Church . . . a few French nuns prayed by the dead, relieving each other at intervals through the night."

The Empress Eugénie, touched by Butler's act, sent him a jewelled pin of the Prince with her deep gratitude for the Order of the Day which he issued at Durban.

He could never keep in check a sarcasm which showed signs of descent from Swift's "savage indignation". His wording was inclined to make stupidity writhe, and this was never helpful to a military career. Like Swift his feeling for Liberty often rejected the policy of the Empire, whose gallant mercenary he was. He could write praise or pity for the foes with whom he engaged. Egypt should remember his words after Tel-el-Kebir addressed to her fallen patriots: "Peace be to them, lying under those big mounds on the lone desert—ten thousand, it is said. No word should soldier utter against them; let that be left to the money-changers. They died the good death. Dust to dust. They did not desert the desert and Egypt will not forget them."

It was the same pen which recorded the Comet otherwise unmentioned in accounts of the Battle: "before day came, the great Comet stood above where the sun would rise. It resembled a vast sheaf of light or a flaming broom sent to sweep the stars from the threshold of the sun."

When British officers write in such style their conduct is not always accountable. When Arabi Pasha, the defeated General, was brought in "and saluted us with dignity. I noticed that only one officer besides myself returned the prisoner's salute. That one was General Drury Lowe. I was in good company."

Arabi might have taken heart from those two salutes. Unknown but unaccountable Englishmen were working for him against "the Levantine jackal, the Khedivial eunuch", who had practically settled his judicial murder. Wilfrid Blunt despatched the legal aid to defend the prisoner and more effectively still, Butler wrote secretly to a personal friend of Gladstone to the effect that if Arabi was executed, Gladstone's enemies would snatch the chance to pursue him with the cry of blood-guiltiness to the grave. So the Eunuchs were disappointed, but if Arabi had been executed instead of exiled to Ceylon, his statue would crown Cairo today. Three years later Gladstone's enemies were able to affix on him the blame for Gordon's death which the grave has not quenched.

Gordon at this time was living in another world like a Knight of the Round Table, but he was liable to descend to

do battle with Evil. It was sometimes the Slave Trade and at another the Egyptian bondholders who discerned that "the presence in Palestine of their great antagonist could only appear as a menace to their designs upon Egypt". Gordon was one whom officials as well as slave-traders and bondholders must loathe. He was not only incorruptible but he was non-dirigible. He would only obey his conscience and in the midst of sudden Messiah-like impulses he was always ready to retire into obscurity. Few admirers studied and described him as well as Butler.

When the final tragedy had arrived and Gordon was enduring his lonely passion in Khartoum, Butler struggled to relieve him. At one moment he hoped he had brought about salvation through boats. There were weeks and months of delay and Gordon seemed able to hold out for ever, but there was worse than stupidity involved. With damning discernment Butler put his finger on the omission: "to secure the route Korosko to Khartoum after Gordon had passed along it to his destination". The authorities in Cairo may have been stupid, but they were not particularly interested in securing Gordon's safe return. The Korosko road alone would have protected him, but by the time that Gladstone was alarmed and the public subversive it was too late. In vain Butler fought *The Campaign of the Cataracts*. At the time he described the Despatch of the Secretary of State for War covering these matters as "absolutely without a parallel in history; the force of fiction, make-believe and pretence could go no further". Twenty-five years later he wrote that he could not say "where the ugly suspicious circumstances ended and the dense stupidities began". He did not believe that it was all an accident that Gordon was conveniently left to the Mahdi. Queen Victoria might shed her imperial grief upon his memory. His stainless memory might wring the bewildered British soul. The bondholders would not grudge Royal tears or the empty tomb in St. Paul's. "Their antagonist" had been obliterated for ever.

Butler was one of those soldiers who sometimes understood the moves in which the military were expected to acquiesce. Naturally he incurred dull enmity amongst the files and

fuglemen of Whitehall. Nevertheless he had an Angel Guardian in the highest spheres of the War Office. Wolseley always admired and protected him. It was possible he even enjoyed, though he could not approve, some of Butler's stinging epigrams. He soon had abundant opportunity to do so.

Butler was always ready to retire into his "mental citadel" and write. His energy sent him shooting with Parnell in the Wicklow Mountains or following Gordon's footsteps in the Holy Land. From a period of meditative obscurity he was summoned to write a report about Army Ordnance. He sat down with gusto to the task. Blue Books and Red Tape he tossed aside. The Nile and Natal had given him visual knowledge of Army ways. Sheathing the sword, he wrote an essay which made the readers in the War Office wince. It passed into print, but the Secretary of State, belonging to a ruling family of decorous efficiency, issued a stiff order to Butler to withdraw every word. All copies were recalled and incinerated. The recommendations were all adopted in time but without credit to Butler. It was the phrasing which hurt the officials. For years some of the phrases were quoted by soldiers under breath.

It was clear that any hope of a career was over. Men with ability to express ideas are thought dangerous. Their dismissal can also be dangerous. In wartime a dangerous man can always be posted to a dangerous post. Unostentatious employment is the better course in times of peace. In Butler's case it was remembered that the defences of London had been neglected since the threat of Napoleon's invasion. He was ordered to select sites for forts. This occupied him pleasantly for a year. Early in 1890 Wolseley, who knew a soldier when he met one, offered him command at Alexandria or Singapore. Butler believed that Africa always held the destiny of British Generals and chose to go to Egypt. The Khedive Tewfik died in the following year but Butler's views were sliced out of the *Autobiography* by the publisher, leaving blocks of asterisks (pp. 361-2) and History the less for a little truth.

Alexandria made a base for Napoleonic study, and Butler visited the battlefields of Austerlitz and Wagram. He

collected evidence to disperse the chief scandals on his hero's fame: the supposed poisoning of the wounded at Jaffa, or the letter by which he was said to have absolved himself from the disaster of the Nile.

From Alexandria he passed to Aldershot and from Aldershot to Dover, whence he shared in the Manoeuvres of 1895. General Redvers Buller on one occasion ordered Butler to move his guns. Seeing it was a false move Butler quietly disobeyed the order. When Buller later sent a counter-mandating order Butler could report that the guns were back already!

Buller won that battle thanks to Butler. His next battle was in South Africa but that he did not win. From Dover Butler held the South-Eastern Command and looked across the Channel from the majestic Castle. The far-travelled Odysseus seemed set for a sunset of peace and honour. The War Office seemed proud, if a little nervous, of him. There was nothing against him except the sting of his epigrams and it was obvious that he would never show the signs of genteel timidity which the bravest warriors are expected to adopt in the presence of civil servants.

He was now a happy man, honoured and promoted: surrounded by a growing family, painted by his talented wife and admired by Queen Victoria, who had a woman's eye for a General on horseback who could add to the splendour of a Royal Review.

Africa always fascinated him: Africa which was dreaded in the Classics as a "strange mother of monsters". To Butler the secret of Africa was her power of wiping out the "Uitlanders" of History, whether Greek or Roman, Arab or Turk. "How quickly the 300 Bishoprics of Augustine's age disappear!" The whole Continent, not Sierra Leone alone, was "the White Man's Grave".

Butler believed in the old-time British as against the "mercenary clamour of the speculator", the new immigrant. He shed showers of epigrams. It was "The difference between the gamekeeper and the gamester": or between Thackeray's Collector at Bogglywallah and "The old gentleman who died in the Charterhouse". He discerned the

Bounder (word untranslatable out of English) and he foretold that Fate would "slay or Africanise the Bounder".

For Butler there was Mary Kingsley, Froude who advocated the justice, which Sir George Grey gave, Saul Solomon (whom Froude called "one of the best men I ever knew") and a certain Bishop Colenso, whose love for the natives was "one of those superb devotions to the ideal". Then there were the tragedies—Lord Chelmsford at Isandula, Colley at Majuba and the Prince Imperial dying under the assegais. Africa kept a sheaf of arrows waiting for unsuspecting British Generals.

Only Butler suspected the future. It was forgotten how queer he was, always siding in principle with the "lesser breeds", such as the Irish or the Egyptians. Wolseley guaranteed him and no one in the War Office dared murmur.

But Tragedy in the Greek manner was moving behind the scenes and the happy domesticity in the Keep of Dover Castle was not to be the happy ending. Africa had not done with Butler and the principles he had been allowed to hold and express in theory were to be tested. He was due to be subjected to the dramatic irony of a Greek play.

All was cloudless until Christmas 1895. General Butler ordered a route march for his Brigade. The Routine was being carried out, when an officer, who had been in London the previous day, whispered to him that an immediate military raid was threatening the Transvaal. The General forgot the route march and while riding home his detective memory recalled that a year previously he had inspected some equipment for the Chartered Company. He had asked what they were wanted for. He was told they were wanted against a native chief. He had not asked if the chief's name was Paul Kruger! "Hardly anyone else wondered why the new Rhodesian Horse required so much equipment" (Sarah Millin's *Rhodes*).

Butler was thinking furiously, and before the route march was over, his informant had been ordered to return to London to tell his friends that invaders of the Transvaal would get the most infernal dusting of their lives!

Four days later the news of the Jameson Raid thunderbolted London and excited the pens of the Poet Laureate and the German Emperor. Jameson fought and retreated from *Krugersdorp*. It was his *Stalingrad* so to speak.

The preliminary vibrations were typically received by the Stock Exchange, not by the War Office. A War Office is never a warmonger, certainly not in English history. Butler summarised the results of the Raid: "The civilian conspirator in high and low place had, conformably to custom, escaped. It was poor Captain Bobby or equally simple Major Freddy who was doing time in gaol".

Butler saw Rhodes and Chamberlain web-spinning while Jameson and his crazy Raiders played the part of flies. They had no use for unsuccessful flies tangling the web or, as Rhodes put it, "upsetting the appplecart". Chamberlain tried to stop Jameson when it was too late.

If Butler knew something about "the seamy side of South Africa wars", the plotting powers knew something about Butler. He was a marked man and could not be left out of schemes.

Rhodes has his historical splendour and a whole country as a namesake but in any memoir of Butler he must occupy a shady background. It should be mentioned that good judges like Sir Harry Johnston and Lord Sydenham noticed the extraordinary change which overcame him after his fall from a horse in 1892. The crystal vision had clouded. The delightful personality had become hurried, worried and carelessly sinister. This was the Rhodes against whom Butler played blindfold chess.

It is difficult to describe Rhodes' influence and power in the 'nineties. He seemed to gather up all the abilities and vices of the old Empire-builders in his person. If Gladstone had been "an old man in a hurry", Rhodes was a young one in haste. He was a greater man than Butler but not a better man. He had set Principalities and Powers above Principles. In his mighty Arsenal, Bribery took its proper place, but Rhodesian Bribery was magnificent. It was best expressed in his advice to General Gordon to "square the Mahdi". Agents and henchmen were swept into hero-worship and

undeviating support. He used both Jewish and Gentile adventurers, whom he despised. He himself sat high above his flagrant Press, which existed no doubt to unify South Africa but also to crush the Boer Republics by revilement and eventually by a prudent approach to force. Dr. Jameson's approach had been the reverse of prudent.

The Rhodes Press promised probity and progress which Butler translated as "Assyrian shrewdness and Teutonic training". To him the great sin against England was "the purchase of the Press to vilify the Dutch".

Rhodes bribed magnificently. Even Parnell had accepted £10,000 for Irish Home Rule. It was certainly one way of keeping Ireland within the Empire. The same Rhodes bribed the ancient University of Oxford from his grave and Cambridge men can be excused for smiling at the statue which keeps the fame of Rhodes amongst the pious benefactors of that cosmopolitan seat of Education. Only the irreverent would suggest placing Dr. Jameson and Barney Barnato in adjoining niches beside him.

Butler had come under Rhodes' eye, and shortly before he went to Alexandria he was offered unlimited power and £20,000 a year for five years to take over Rhodes' new colony south of the Zambesi. His refusal marked him at least as singular. He was content to wash his hands of South Africa for ever, but the War Office had a habit of consulting him. He had South African campaigns at his fingers' ends and he was asked whether Laing's Nek should be occupied with troops. He replied that would mean immediate war with the Dutch. He told himself he was arguing with "the most stupendous factor of folly" he had ever known. He was at the time steadily writing the Life of poor General Colley who had fallen at Majuba. He thought while he wrote, and asked himself: "the total trend of things; that is the difficult matter to grasp in life: where is this thing going?"

As a matter of fate "the total trend of things" (a good translation of the *Zeitgeist*) was about to pick him up on its way. Something was puzzling the War Office intensely in South Africa, but General Butler, who alone could unravel their questioning, puzzled them equally. Suddenly, out of

the African blue, Butler was offered the military command at the Cape. This time it was Butler who was puzzled.

What had happened behind the scenes? At the Cape was an ambitious, highly principled product of Balliol, Alfred Milner: a pet pupil of Jowett, now High Commissioner. Later years revealed his private correspondence with Chamberlain as Secretary for the Colonies. In October 1898 when the General at the Cape died, Milner was afraid the War Office would make it a billet "for some worn-out General". Milner proposed the brave Lord Methuen who ended as a prisoner of the Boers. Chamberlain was asked "to get the appointment filled by special selection and not the ordinary official routine".

The War Office certainly made a "special selection", but one which shattered the hopes of the "Raiders". It is good policy to hurl your severest critic into the breach. But only Wolseley could have filled the post without consulting Chamberlain. What Wolseley had in mind will never be known. Was he giving the Colonial Office a soldierly cuff or had he decided to give Butler a supreme chance? No one knew Butler's character better: and no one knew the difficulties better than Butler. When the unbelievable cipher arrived, he accepted but reluctantly.

Chamberlain sulkily acquiesced. Presumably each hoped for the best while vaguely fearing the worst. But neither dreamed how bad the other would turn out to be. They differed on everything it was worth differing about.

There was one momentous interview with Chamberlain. Butler sat watching "the eager, white, sharp, anxious, tight-drawn face" which was watching him no less. A series of minor topics were reviewed but a casual reference to the South African Republics ended ominously: "If they should force us to attack them then the blow would have to be a crushing one". If Chamberlain spoke these words, he was suggesting a military policy which has become familiar to an unhappy world. Small countries should not conscientiously force great Powers to attack them.

A few days later Butler at sea passed Milner, who had promptly returned to take counsel over the new situation.

This meant that Butler would arrive as High Commissioner as well as General in command. Little did he conceive there was a brewing storm. His obvious view was that Wolseley had appointed him as the only General with experience to deal with the Boers in peace or war. Cynics might hope that, if he could not ride the storm, he would be swallowed thereby. There were plans maturing behind the scenes but he had been "sent upon that momentous errand at the shortest notice without any warning, without any orders". He had not received the slightest hint of contingent war except in Chamberlain's words. Twenty years later he had decided that "prominent people were at work to bring that War about at an early date". He found no sign in the field, no preparation of transport, no reinforcements—but if people thought Jameson could rush the Transvaal with a company of amateur troopers, they could not believe an increase of Regulars was necessary. Butler went out blindfold while officials wondered what line he would take when the bandages fell off. Milner's biographer wrote of "this clever but erratic Irishman". At best they hoped for an obedient cog. That he would prove their damning critic unto the Day of Judgment hardly seemed possible. His to obey and not to reason why. Anxious curiosity passed to furious but suppressed annoyance. Butler was a pro-Boer!

Rhodes never had the courtesy or perhaps the time to call on the new arrival, with the result that they never met, though they passed each other like ships in the night at the end of the year: "Our eyes met for an instant. The expression of his face struck me as one of peculiar mental pain. I seemed to have seen it once before".

There was an Eclipse of the Moon that night, and in later years Memory served a vivid scene: "The face of the Moon seemed to have been washed over with a blood-stained cloth and the old garden with its lofty cypress trees looked in the sombre light like a nocturnal graveyard."

Butler surveyed his task. The military he could deal with, but civilian life was made sordid by a lying Press denigrating everything Dutch. Racial animosity was cultivated for its own sake. With a single staff-officer he visited Johannesburg,

described to him as "Monte Carlo superimposed upon Sodom and Gomorrah". It was not a beautiful fruitage of Empire.

The disgusted General asked himself what freak had dumped a gold mine into a land of "primitive Christian farmers". He never minced words, and wrote home that "Houndsditch and the Stock Exchange are not the sources from which the redemption of South Africa is to be looked for". English investors were fed alternate "booms and bogeys".

One of the bogeys was Kruger: a Bible-sniffing Pecksniff to the English Press: to Butler "a poor lion-hunter who could cut off half his own hand when a gunshot had shattered it".

Butler knew a South African history which was unknown to Birmingham Sunday Schools. He set himself in the line of the great Englishmen like Sir George Napier, Sir George Grey and Sir Harry Smith. "The victor of Albueira [Napier] made roads across the mountains. He of Aliwal [Smith] made friends with the Dutch Boers. They built dorps and named them after him and his wife." But Ladysmith so pleasantly named became a tragic corner in the relations of Briton and Boer.

He regarded himself as a pointsman on the line between South Africa and Whitehall. Whitehall "knew nothing of the truth, has never known it, and apparently will never know it". Every transmission from the other end existed only to mislead and inflame the Empire. Butler gave the Home authorities warnings as clear as the brief despatch which a certain Hand wrote over the banquet-hall of Belshazzar. After Rhodes and some pet myrmidons left for London at the end of 1898, Butler cabled home what he considered a plot to explode South Africa: "It is needless to indicate the original train-layers: they are nearer to you than to me!"

He decided that he would make his plans without provoking the Boers, who became convinced that the Empire had sent a just man into a land seething with greed and aggression. He surveyed the frontiers and thought thus: "As commander of the troops I held the balance. There would be no war while I was there. If the Raiders raided, I would inexorably

run them in; if the Boers raided, I would as inevitably run them out; but I knew that the chances were a thousand to one that the Boers would not do anything of the sort while I held the helm."

While there are Commanders like Butler, there are no wars. The Boers respected and feared him. Long afterwards, one of their leaders said to him: "It was lucky for us, General, you did not take the field against us". They did not respect the British Statesmen, and after three years of war they ceased to fear British Generals. As for the worthy Methuen, whom the officials had tried to steer into the Cape Command, the day came when the Boers threatened to shoot anyone who wounded or killed him!

Butler felt strong enough to have his way if supported from the War Office. But Wolseley, having thrown him into the great testing position, could do no more. The War Office was far too confused to have a policy. Butler was left to deal with Boer and Briton on his own. To the Irish humanitarian both were brothers. "The British officer and the Boer farmer have always been by nature and inclination good friends. Both were open-air sportsmen . . ." This was not the opinion of the Rhodes Press. Financial and filibuster agencies pervaded the situation. Jew or Gentile, Butler utterly loathed the instruments which were being used in the name of British Empire and Freedom.

It was his ambition to federate South Africa on the same lines as "the creation of Canada by Lord Durham". This was "legitimate and lasting Empire-building". The rape of a gold-bearing neighbour meant the postponement of a peaceful South Africa for a century. Butler found few supporters in Africa but Olive Shreiner was one and her letter the only survivor of his correspondence. England was being misinformed, but Butler remembered that Canonists allow an appeal from an ill-informed Pope to one better informed. He was convinced that the Pendulum of Fair Play would swing in his direction. Milner "must see the awful volume of lies which the syndicate gangs have so long passed off as truth upon the British public". Milner found himself championing the Uitlanders, many of whom were far from

British, though they appealed wildly to the British Flag. Jowett's disciple must have found himself in an atmosphere remote from the Oxford Common-room. "If there was a being unfitted to that atmosphere it was Milner" is the comment of Sarah Millin, biographer of Kruger.

Butler had no idea why Rhodes was in such a desperate hurry. He maintained the correctest relations with Milner, who was no less an idealist than himself. The difference between the two men was that Milner was academical, Balliol of Balliol, whereas Butler was practical. If Butler had a complex, it was for the peasant—the farmer—the man of the soil, whether Irish, Egyptian or Dutch.

Butler and Milner were scrupulously fair to each other, but the slow degeneration of Jowett's pupil cannot be concealed in the *Milner Papers*. Milner had lived on the heights with the translator of Plato's *Republic*. Slowly he was pulled down to the level of the Rand. He hated being pushed into hostility against a man like Butler. To a fellow-official he wrote: "Don't think that Butler is a bad fellow. He is hasty and rhetorical, fearfully deficient in judgment. But he is well-meaning enough and a most agreeable companion."

The condescending Milner made all the excuses he could to officials, whose chief thought was to get rid of a General whose first speech at Grahamstown "to the inner circle of the party working for war had come like a shell".

He reported to Selborne in May of 1899: "very secret. . . . He has behaved perfectly well towards me since my return. He does not meddle in political affairs in any way. On the other hand he keeps me absolutely at arm's length over military matters . . . convinced there is more danger in interfering than in letting things take their course . . . the last thing I should think of would be to suggest his removal at this juncture for he has got hold of the threads."

But how could Butler be stirred to stir up the Boers so that they should force him to take action? Milner asked the War Office to give him a hint, which "should carry no suggestion of its source"!

Milner was rapidly sliding down hill: *facilis descensus Avernii*. A month later he wrote to Chamberlain: "The General. He

is too awful. He has, I believe, made his military preparations alright, but beyond that I cannot get him to make the least move . . . at the same time there is nothing to lay hold of. He never interferes with my business and is perfectly polite. But he is absolutely no use!!" For what was he no use? queries the historian.

The only use which Plato would allow to soldiers was soldierly or strategical. Politically no use was Butler for he was "a violent Krugerite"! In that sense, no doubt, Fox and Burke were "violent Washingtonites". The key question in Butler's career touched his military preparations before the disasters which broke upon Army and Empire after his return home. Milner's biographer says he was "queering the pitch". On the contrary he was preparing the military pitch for some very rough bowling. The War Office recommended advances, threats, offence against the Boers. He realised that his only defence was to draw in his inadequate horns. He had estimated 40,000 troops were necessary. He was urged to take the offensive with a tenth: "advanced positions upon and even over the frontiers, the adoption of which must have led to the earliest and most complete disasters". How right he was in declining to let limited troops be "shot into hostile space having behind them military voids many hundred of miles in length". The great lonely spaces of Canada or the Veldt had given Butler vistas unvisioned in the best Aldershot tactics. In vain was he urged to snap up the passes of the Drakensburg. He went his way planning "easy retirement in face of superior numbers", but the plans which he kept secret from Pretoria and Pall Mall were not communicated to Milner.

Lord Sydenham, who was then close to *The Times*, wrote over thirty years later: "Grave injustice was done to Sir William Butler, who was a very able man. The war was made by the gold and diamond Jews, who captured Milner. . . . I knew Sir William and we compared notes. I am certain that he foresaw what was coming and why, and that he warned the Government in vain. Both he and I estimated the forces required at about three times that which the War Office accepted, and we were both far under the mark."

In his memoirs *My Working Life* Lord Sydenham wrote: "After careful study I arrived at 80,000 men as the minimum force which would be needed. . . . I discussed this question with Sir William Butler, who with far greater knowledge than mine, had reached almost exactly the same figure. We were both mistaken." Forty or eighty thousand, the Empire eventually needed 200,000.

The months of 1899 were hastening away and everyone was in a hurry. Butler considered Milner was playing a secondary, rather pitiable part. At least, pity was Butler's feeling after interviews with Milner in May. Milner wished pressure brought on the Transvaal Government while the Franchise was being mooted for Uitlanders. Butler laughed at the idea of moving troops. Then he spoke flat. There were "occult influences at work, backed by enormous means and quite without conscience, to produce war in South Africa for selfish ends". He wrote to his War Office chief of the "certainty of misery and misfortune to this country greater than it has heretofore known in its history".

Butler was playing as lone and despairing a game as his hero Gordon in Khartoum. "Yet not one word of warning, official or private, was coming from the War Office." Oddly enough officially "the outlook was one of profound peace," but under the mill-pool raged the corrupt eddies of filibuster and financier, thwarted from possessing the land of gold and diamonds which belonged to another.

The threads were in Butler's hands but Chamberlain was trying to worry and worm them away. He proposed to doctor Butler's Despatches, which Butler utterly refused, cabling (May 26, 1899): "General could only regard his concurrence in proposed omission of passages as a stultification by himself of his own opinions to which he still adheres".

Then Chamberlain gave Butler up. A new tack was hastily tried and within a week Milner was conferring at Bloemfontein with Kruger. Perhaps Kruger might prove less obstinate than the Irishman! There are passages of pathetic bitterness in Butler's *Autobiography*. When Kruger realised at the Conference that by the Franchise (votes for aliens) or force, his Republic was doomed, his feelings overcame him and he

bent his head and wept: "It is our country you want. It is our country you want!" What else?

The failure of the Bloemfontein Conference was a turning point in African history. Incidentally it marked the Third Act of the Tragedy for Butler. He was still determined to check wickedness in high places. He was trying desperately to save a ship whose rudder was set upon the rocks. He had received a vital letter from Mr. Schreiner, the Prime Minister of the Cape. It might be presumed that having defeated Rhodes at the Polls he was a fitter person to negotiate with Kruger than Milner, who like every envoy from England had become a Rhodes-man, whether he wished or not. The stakes were now running high and the players were reckless. Butler forwarded Schreiner's letter through a higher personage to one higher still: to the Queen!

As a feudal and Catholic Irishman, Butler accounted the Queen more highly than many so-called Loyalists. It was part of the tragedy that events were being pressed forward in her name. Not since the Flavian Emperors had the world tasted so long of Imperial Peace. The Roman world within and without knew that Justice stood blindfold but sworded behind the Legions.

Butler sent the War Office a letter he had received from Pretoria pregnant with heavy truths: "The white races of the Transvaal are loyal to Queen Victoria. You find some picture of her in nearly every home, especially among the Boer homes. They say, these Boers and their wives, that they do not believe in the words of English Ministers but they do in the words of Queen Victoria . . ."

Butler loathed the cloud of shysters and adventurers who had settled like flies scenting carrion upon the confines of the Transvaal. It was hateful to him that the campaign of corruption and coarse abuse was carried out under the British Flag, and ultimately under the name of the Queen. Her Tragedy was advancing no less: for she had passed her fourth triumphant Act and the last was at hand.

Butler had one confidant whom he trusted in the high ranks, General Buller, and to him he wrote from the Castle, Capetown (June 21, 1899):

"The Jews and a few others seem to be doing the work of the devil here to their hearts' content and to the despair of tens of thousands of honest sober-minded and loyal people. So far as I can read the real undercurrent of all the blinds and manoeuvres going on—it is this. The Chartered Company is on the verge of Bankruptcy. The revenue is £250,000—the expenditure £750,000. Be it, Rhodes (and John Bull as a sleeping partner) are paying so far the deficit. The gold in Rhodesia, though rich in many places, is 'scrappy' and 'pocketty'. The natives are ill-treated—they object to be forced into the mines—and run away. The output has decreased of late. What then is to be done? Why! get hold of the Johannesburg fields. There gold in vast and *regular paying* quantities is to be found. The gang has got hold of three fourths of the London Press. Their agents here say so. They have also got some papers in Berlin and Paris. All the flag-wagging, expansion-railroad to Cairo, etc., are means to hide the end. To John Bull in his stall it looks all right. Behind the secret it is a poor game. You are lucky in having the clean square work of Aldershot to do. I should never have accepted this billet, had I known the true state of matters, and it cost me a mint of money and the best quarters in England to come out, but perhaps the quarters had something to say to the offer."

The sands were running faster than ever: "the supposed peaceful, diplomatic, cautious Colonial Office running mad for war; the warlike War Office seemingly bent upon profound Peace". Here was a touch of the irony so loved by the Greek dramatists.

The War Office became hopelessly confused as various branches took varying action without reference to the Commander-in-Chief. In July Redvers Buller (secretly designated to succeed Butler) told the Under Secretary for War that every Department was cabling in a different sense "to that poor unfortunate General at the Cape, and you will drive him mad".

Butler was far from being driven mad. He went ahead with his preparations to save the Army which he loved from disaster. He was a link with an Army which had fought

for Freedom. He came to ask: "What has become of those old Greek Gods, for not only are the figures gone but the faces have also vanished? What subtle change has come upon the race? Is it the work of railroads, Free Trade, the Penny Press, Democracy, Education?"

Butler had no idea that Chamberlain, Milner and the Governor of Natal, Hely-Hutchinson, were arranging a plan of campaign without the least reference to him! All he knew was that Milner favoured a "ring" round the Republics and that a raid had been suggested from Rhodesia on Pretoria. This was simple folly like some of the advice from London: "I was being urged from London to go forward with my puny detachments into the Republics". The real planning was being done there where Rhodes, in far too great a hurry for half-measures, was steadily interviewing Chamberlain. Butler felt that "more powerful forces were joined with the old agencies in the effort to force a racial war upon South Africa". Every effort was made to push Butler into the eddies. Milner asked Butler to organise this precious raid from Rhodesia. Butler saw the trap and asked for orders in writing signed by the High Commissioner. As no instructions had arrived from home, he decided to use his own judgment lest "it would be said that I had precipitated a conflict before we were prepared for it; perhaps brought on a war when the Home Government desired peace". Milner flinched, but he had the necessary sarcasm to say: "It can never be said, Sir William Butler, that *you* precipitated a conflict with the Dutch".

It would have to be precipitated by other channels than the military. Butler felt insulted, drew himself up and said: "I understand your meaning. There can be no further use in my continuing the interview." Milner was left cowed and angry.

The end was in sight but not without further swordplay between Milner and Butler. The War Office was now ordering transport and asking for "any observations". Butler answered angrily:

"You ask my observations. I believe that a war between the white races, coming as a sequel to Jameson Raid and the

subsequent events of last three years, would be the greatest calamity that ever occurred in South Africa."

Milner was shown the words and demurred. It was a wrong impression and so forth. There was no further protest when Butler declared he made them in the highest interests of the Empire and for the honour of Her Majesty's Army! But these were not the predominant considerations at the time. The interests of the Rand came first. Chamberlain replied: "You cannot understand too clearly that, whatever your private opinions, it is your duty to be guided in all questions of policy by those who are fully aware of our views and whom you will, of course, loyally support". The plans he had kept to himself were not called for till June.

Butler had higher views of a soldier's duty, but they were not wanted. By the end of June Milner was cabling to say the General's political opinions impaired his efficiency. "Things have become critical now. Butler or I will have to go". . . . At this juncture we are told that "the effect of Butler's attitude was to check the despatch of 10,000 men advocated by Wolseley". Nothing could be more utterly removed from the truth. From beginning to end he had said 40,000 soldiers would be too few. They scorned his estimate (which events terribly proved insufficient), and expected him to raise a rabble of volunteer raiders. He left it to the War Office to reinforce, mobilise or act. He never forced the War Office as he was expected. He advised them and waited for orders which never came. He had no intention of taking orders from Milner, who had reached the stage of abusing him to the authorities: "it is indeed terrible to feel that the man on whom one ought to be able to rely and who above all others ought to be on the alert, keeps one at arm's length and resolutely buries his head in the sand".

Butler happened to be very much on the alert. Somehow he had accurately gauged the strength of the Boers, the only soldier who had done so, and he made the only possible dispositions. Had he remained in his command, many a disaster would have been avoided and many a brave man would have escaped burial in the sand aforesaid. But had he remained, the Boers would never have had the folly to take

alarm and invade Natal. Kruger's Generals respected Butler in every way. The War Office had to do something so they sent a reproof.

Early in July Butler resigned his command. A month later it was accepted and he was told to hand over to Major-General Symons, an immediate victim of the war. Butler was told to return home as soon as possible and "to avoid demonstration by those hostile to English views", as though he had wished for bands and banners from the Dutch. "English views" being of course the views of the Rand, the Raiders and Rhodes. The instruction bore Chamberlain's touch and nettled Butler to write; "Oh the pity and the poverty of it all!"

The Dutch in Capetown would gladly have seen him off but they knew it would be misunderstood. Alone he stood on the deck and looked for the Lion's Head on Table Mountain which the Dutch have always connected with their fortunes under the Southern Cross. It was shrouded with a cloud, or perchance may we say—clouded with a shroud.

It was August 23, 1899, and Milner cabled to Chamberlain: "After long dragging the end has come quickly. . . . It has been an awful experience". Words which might have suited the Diaries of a certain well-meaning High Commissioner in Roman Judaea.

Before Butler left the Cape, the brush that had painted "The Roll-call" painted a stirring picture of the General riding against the background of the mountains he had always admired.

His magnificent physique never showed better than on horseback. He resembled one of King Arthur's Knights riding out on a lonely quest in the uniform of a British Lieutenant-General. A saddened face perhaps but haunting certainly to any Boer or Briton who had ever gazed into those fearless eyes. In his holster he carried the conscience of England: the England which from time to time preserves the world by her own example.

Twenty years previously he had given military honours to a dead Prince and the Empress remembering wrote in sympathy. Butler's letter to the Empress is almost the only one of his to survive:

"Today I put beside it another message from the same valiant and unforgetting heart. It is the more prized because I think that between its lines the note of South Africa, always sad, can be read. But, Madam, it is only a passing cloud."

The War broke out in October 1899.

AFTERMATH

The moment Sir William Butler was withdrawn, the Boers despaired. Knowing they would be challenged for their country they foolishly issued the Ultimatum. This they would not have dared or wished to do, had Butler been in command. He himself returned to bear the fiercest accusations in silence. The Jackal and the Jackass were released upon his name and honour. It was not his fault that two Christian folk were flung into murderous grips. It was not only the Gates of Janus which were closed but the New Testament.

Before the actual outbreak Butler tackled a high official in London (he would never say who it was: Chamberlain or Salisbury or Wolseley?). The great man could only say poohpooh! The war would not cost ten millions and by Christmas the Flag would fly over Bloemfontein!

Butler, so voluble in warning and despatch, became tongue-tied. The War Office respected his silence and he was given the Western Command as well as Leave. They knew or began to know that he knew too much. Or was it Wolseley's hand moving unseen?

Parliament and Public relied on Buller who was hurried to the scene. Like Butler he knew the facts for he had been Adjutant General and he did not conceal his contempt for people who put financial interests first. He was under no illusions and knew the Government's preparations were inadequate totally. His representations to Lord Lansdowne, Secretary of War, though not unsupported by Wolseley, made not the slightest impression. He failed even to see the Prime Minister, the somewhat Olympian Salisbury who had left it to "Joe" to loose the dogs of War.

The brave and unfortunate General was thrown into the

gap. Butler rushed to Southampton to wish him Godspeed. This conversation occurred:

Butler: "Have you cut the wires with Whitehall?"

Buller: "William, worse luck I have not."

Butler: "Then I am sorry for you. Unless you have power to put Milner on board ship and send him to England, you will find your work at the Cape cut out for you."

Buller found Milner in a state of complete panic and saying much to the Staff which in calmer moments he would not have allowed himself to admit. What Milner said strikingly confirmed what Butler had written to Buller.

Butler was travelling with his sons in Spain when the "Black Week" of disasters occurred. "They'll have to send me out now" was his first thought. But the pride of Chamberlain could not have endured calling on his critic to clean up the ghastly mess. Butler would gladly have served under Buller whom he greatly loved, great contrast as they were, the Dog of Devon and type of Tipperary.

Meanwhile the Boer War continued disastrous. Milner's "ring" strategy proved as effective as the mice who proposed belling the cat. Generals committed blunders for which Boy Scouts today would be reprimanded. Picked regiments marched into massacre or surrender. Heroism of the men was constantly unavailing. The pity was that trenches of dead Scotch and Irish boys, to say nothing of English from farm and holt, were smoking to the pitiless skies: for what?

It was a question of time—months or years—before a nation of farmers could be dispossessed of their fatal inheritance underground.

Butler was blamed and vilified. With grim humour he gave the *Daily Mail* credit for one thing. He said they charged a halfpenny whereas the others charged a penny for their lies. He was accused of not warning the authorities! He had not made the proper dispositions or preparations!! The War Office, knowing the facts, relied on his soldierly silence. The climax came when a Secretary for War stated that orders, clear and helpful, had been sent to him at the Cape!

At the first disasters, which he had made every disposition to avoid, he offered to go out again in any capacity, but the

authorities were determined to drink down their own dregs. Instead of the Corunna-like retreats which Butler believed the only possible way of meeting the impact of the Boers, the Generals were making frontal attacks and forward marches. Penn Symons fell. Wauchope fell. Buller attacked across the Tugela and lost his guns. White was shut up in Ladysmith and Butler kept wondering why he did not fight his way out. The War turned on Ladysmith which Butler had considered a "tragic selection". Troops had been planted there in 1897 to "have a steadying effect upon the Boers". They had included a battery of guns which Boer visitors had been invited to see in practice.

The *Autobiography* follows with a fine specimen from the General, when roused as a raconteur. To impress the Boers a herd of goats were tethered as targets on Waggon Hill. No representative of the S.P.C.A. was present or he would have prevented the shrapnel being played on the unlucky animals for twenty minutes. The result was incredible. There were twenty goats living on Waggon Hill at the beginning of the action. With cease-fire there were twenty-two all alive, for one nanny had been frightened into twins. "This was all very funny", wrote Butler, "but for me it had another aspect . . . a blind belief amongst our own people that these guns could be shot forward at any given moment to end at one blow the Boer resistance." Even so it was felt that British guns should have found other targets than pregnant goats!

What then was Butler's plan which he would not divulge to Milner? "Here at Glencoe was the true military position. . . . Going to Dundee instead of stopping at Glencoe probably cost England 200 millions sterling." The initial error was of the first magnitude. In the situation both he and the War Office preferred to be silent. In any case the volume of abuse soon shifted to the War Office. He realised that he was sitting on the sunny side of the thorn-hedge of criticism. It was a pity that he never lived to read what Lord Esher wrote to Harcourt before Christmas: "And what a justification of the unfortunate Butler! However, it is all too wretched to write about." The British Army had endured their Black Week: defeat upon defeat.

The War lasted for years. Butler's reading of History was that the Devil always gets in first, but the wheels of God start grinding slowly, and in Africa more slowly than elsewhere. Before the War was over, Rhodes died, after enduring siege in Kimberley. Kimberley was relieved, but there waited him an enemy at the gates who is not accustomed to lift siege. It was clear now why Rhodes had been in such a desperate hurry. Milner was in at the death but he did not find Kitchener sufficiently severe at Vereenigen. Brave men are lenient to each other, but Milner wrote of an "awful ten days but I saved more than I expected". Butler also had been found "awful".

When the War was over in 1902 Butler cruelly remarked: "We looted the Boers and the Jews looted us". The Cynic will add that everybody was served right.

No Generals survived in reputation save Roberts and Kitchener. Roberts returned before the close and was received by the Queen. It was the last audience she gave. The War was part of her tragedy and she failed to survive. Before the last Boer commando had been scattered and the last farm-house burnt to ashes, the great Queen died, magnificent in her mourning grief.

The new King made Esher his unofficial Vizier and sent him to listen to Butler under examination (February 11, 1903). "Sir William Butler", reported Esher, "met with the usual fate of those who give unpalatable advice. That much of the advice he gave has since proved correct, is not possibly of advantage to him in certain quarters. There is no doubt that he is among the ablest of Your Majesty's servants and possesses an intellect capable of grasping large problems and of dealing with men in a practical manner. His Irish blood may possibly influence his temper and political judgment but leaves his military capacity untouched. Intellectually he stands (as he does physically) a head and shoulders above the majority of his comrades. His evidence upon the preparations for War only proved once more that uncertain counsels prevailed throughout the summer of 1899."

A few days later Esher reported an interview with the Secretary of War. Mr. Broderick was thinking of

recommending Butler to the King as Quartermaster-General but the Cabinet were not favourable. This was not unexpected, for Butler's words under examination had made their wounds smart. Esher told Broderick "that in purely military matters no more capable soldier could be found in Your Majesty's forces", but he asked the King to keep this interview secret: "Lord Esher, as Your Majesty is aware, conceals nothing from his Sovereign". The public were not to be told.

Much is not intended ever to reach the Historian, but sometimes Truth takes a jump out of her well! Naturally everyone concerned was dead before the *Esher Papers* yielded what Historians have been slow to notice: the military vindication of Sir William Butler.

Time brings strange surprises and Butler, without reading much that was written behind the scenes, realised that his enemies feared to have him disgraced. In 1905 he was made President of the Committee inquiring into War Stores Scandals. His Report was full of sarcastic humour which brought the usual official indignation, especially such phrases as "Pantaloons in Puttees" or "Harlequins in Helmets". His pen betrayed him, but there was no contradicting the underlying truth of his words. In the following year the King added G.C.B. to his name.

He was sent by the *Tribune* to write letters from the new scenes in South Africa following the return of the pro-Boer Liberals to power. His letters were printed under the saucy title *From Naboth's Vineyard*! It was a bitter reminder for a Catholic General to give to a Bible-reading public. After all, Kruger had once told Rhodes that ill-gotten goods were accursed.

Butler might well have enjoyed his revenge, but he was seeking ways of reconciliation. He only asked that there should be "no old Raiders in command or in Council". This did not prevent Dr. Jameson eventually becoming Prime Minister, but the Arch-filibuster was dead: gathered to the glorious Motoppo Hills in a tomb commensurate with his dreams.

Butler had no word against the dead. The only dead man the Irish ever abuse is Cromwell, and Butler added his share

when he retired to Ireland and studied the byways of Irish History.

To Cromwell he devoted an Essay which ended: "You remember the choice which Cromwell gave the unfortunate Irish—Hell or Connaught. I turn to the last page of Cromwell's latest biographer and read: 'where Connaught Square now stands, trodden under foot and beaten by horse-hoofs lies the dust of the Great Protector.'"

And with an ironic chuckle he passed on. Out of Cromwell's "displaced persons" was hammered the Irish Nation. As Alba made the Dutch nation in Europe, was it possible that Rhodes and the War he engineered made the permanent hard core of the Dutch nation in Africa? Butler spoke memorably of the Boers for not committing one outrage in the four years following a war "which saw every Boer homestead destroyed, all stock killed, even Boer Bibles carried off".

His books never made comfortable reading, sometimes even unpleasant, and they passed accordingly out of print. Their very titles were like flames and they sparkled with epigrams illustrating his Philosophy—such as:

"In the Services the servants have ever been better than the masters."

"The Pagoda Tree has its roots in the military graveyards of India."

"Did not a son of Cain build the first city?"

"Between the coster and the cottier there comes that gulf which measures the distance between victory and defeat."

"The cradle of an Army is the cottage of the peasant."

"The Roman nose could not have stood an Arctic winter, hence the limits of the Roman Empire."

"Valley of Ajalon! The wonder is that the Sun and Moon do not often stand still to have a longer look at it."

Others have dealt with him since in books. Butler proved somewhat of a stumbling block to the biographers of Chamberlain and Milner. They have dismissed him as an eccentric and ebullient Irishman, rather a joke and not to be taken over-seriously. It will be best to add to their weak and makeshift commentary the opinion that Wolseley left of Butler in his book, *The Story of a Soldier's Life*, as "possessing

the warmest and most chivalrous of hearts. Had he lived in mediaeval times, he would have been the knight-errant of everyone in distress. Sympathy for all human, indeed for all animal suffering, was in him an active living force, always striving to help the poor in body, and to comfort the weak-hearted. A loyal subject of the Crown, he yet always entertained a heart-felt sympathy for those whom he believed to be a down-trodden race, and a lost cause appealed to all his deepest feeling. He was the first to recommend the raising of a Regiment of Irish Foot Guards and he has lived to see carried out what he was scouted at and ridiculed for by some unwise men at the time."

An early adventure of Butler's boyhood survived in memory to make stirring pages in *Red Cloud*, a book he wrote for boys about the Great Prairie, afterwards republished with a foreword by the Chief Scout, Baden-Powell, who mentioned that he had learnt from Butler's *Story of a Failure* how to deal with native levies.

The boyish adventure was an attempt to raid the eagle's nest on the over-hanging descent down Cooma-sa-harn in the Galtee mountains. He lost hold of the rope by which he descended but recovered it, thanks to an attack by the mother eagle herself. Baden-Powell commended his scout-craft on this occasion but forays on eyries are not to be commended to the ordinary Boy Scout!

The story reads incredibly but not less incredibly than the famous story he told of shooting eleven snipe at one shot in a hollow near Bansha. No doubt some were hit by the ricochets but it became part of his legend in Ireland.

All his books remain out of print and his memory has been forgotten. Only the *Dictionary of National Biography* has erected a fair and pleasing memorial to him in the National Cemetery of that name. But the only Englishman for whose opinion Butler cared a farthing dip had written to him from his deathbed: "I always regarded you as a host in yourself ready to undertake any difficult job and the more dangerous it was, the more you enjoyed it". When Roberts gave up the Commandership in Chief he said that Butler was the man to succeed him except that he was always on the side of the underdog.

Of his powers with the pen no less than Ruskin had noted in his *Bible of Amiens* that Butler "could have written all my books about landscape and pictures".

Nothing was really lacking to Butler in life except the opportunity of a great campaign. He did not survive the few years, when he would certainly have been offered the command of the Irish National Volunteers. On the other side he would have found Milner again, who had volunteered for Carson's Covenanters. But Fate smilingly pulled the blinds. In 1910 he died in his Irish home. It had been a long and troublesome way back to Tipperary.

LEO TOLSTOY

ON a bright snowy morning in the December of 1907 I awoke for the first time at Ysnaya Polyana in the remote regions of Central Russia. I looked around to find I was sleeping in a school room, for it was thronged with empty desks. I was lying in a corner and wondering the where and why of the unfamiliar present. I remembered vividly that I was a guest of Tolstoy.

It is difficult to recall the immense prestige which this extraordinary man enjoyed throughout Europe towards the turn of the last century. He was the great figure in many spheres. He was the greatest living Russian, at least the best known, the most constantly discussed and the most admired of all Moscovy. In the world of Letters he stood on the top of world literature as well as of Russian writing. In every country he was translated and read as a superb novelist. But he was more. He was a philosopher, a leader of mankind, an interpreter of God. On every point he threw the world as well as his own country into controversy. Although he was a Christian and a Pacifist he thrived in the Czardom, and although he was a vegetarian he had survived endless Russian winters. He was the only Continental worthy of pilgrimage in the manner that Englishmen used to visit Rousseau or Goethe. There was more than a superb example of the writing power to visit at Ysnaya Polyana. There was a code, a new indication to life.

Life with the close of the nineteenth century was self-satisfied, well-assured but maddening to the idealist. Everything that was second-rate was glorified. Mediocrity was worshipped in the form of a golden image. Stagnation was

satisfactory because it was an era of the lotus-eater. Tennyson's poem about that happy condition reflected Victorian life.

The rumour of Tolstoy's life, which would not attract so much attention today, spread like the moving light of a comet across the face of a dead planet. That a wealthy and titled nobleman should abandon his class and privilege and descend to the life of a peasant was astonishing enough. That he did so in the name of Christianity was startling and threw landowners and church-going people in every country into contradictions or at least into questioning perturbation. A few wild noblemen followed his example on the Steppes. It would have been interesting if an English peer with vast estates had done the same in the Shires during the reign of Queen Victoria. Perhaps it might have changed English country life. It might have led to a Christian Labour Party. Squires might today be holding their own as yeomen farmers. Labourers might be filling the empty churches of the countryside. The town would not have defeated and depressed the countryside so utterly.

Tolstoy seemed to have achieved little except the tremendous advertisement for his books and the world fame which dogged his attempts to reach social annihilation. At first it was rumoured that he had successfully combined Christianity with Socialism and then with Communism. The truer version was that he professed literal Christianity and Nihilism in one breath.

It was an astounding experience for a Cambridge man in his fourth year to wake up one morning knowing that he would breakfast with Tolstoy. It was difficult to say which had most inspired the social idealists of that time: novels like *Resurrection* or the pictures of the emaciated, bearded Count slowly pushing an obsolete plough through the fields. Breakfast was simple indeed, but it was followed by a mental feast when Tolstoy invited me to visit his workroom and discuss the scattered pages of what would prove his last and most important message to mankind. For a young man to walk with Tolstoy on the scenes of his labours was like a throbbing dream. No hero-worshipper can have enjoyed such time as was given to me to enjoy. There is an enjoyment Paradisally

promised to biographers when they meet their subjects for the first time. Upon this earth Boswell must have felt it, when first introduced to Dr. Johnson—but who else?

Whether I was ever destined to write a single word about Tolstoy, I drank the Boswellian fervour to the sparkling dregs.

He was very old and I knew I should not see him again. No moment was to be lost and no word unrecorded. I believe I was the last of the long line of disciples who had visited him from every country to learn if Christianity was practicable in ordinary life according to the actual injunctions of the Gospel: or at least according to the stark interpretations which he gave to the most disputed documents of history. If I was the last, he took singular care to impress me with his doctrines. It seems difficult to believe that I am one of the few human beings alive who can answer the question: "And did you see Tolstoy plain?"

Ysnaya Polyana was an old-fashioned forty-roomed house, wooden built, with gleaming white columns and balconies, needless to say destroyed since by the Germans. I always feel that, had Napoleon been the recent invader of Russia, he would have protected such an interesting domicile.

"The great Emathian conqueror bid spare
The House of Pindarus when temple and tower
Went to the ground."

So dealt Alexander of Macedon with the eagle's nest. But the family home of Tolstoy was savagely wrecked. The huge white park with the frozen lakes must still remain like the glittering shroud about the grave of the great man with whom I walked awhile.

He was more than condescending. He was communicative. He told me much of his own life which I have since filled up from the libraries of books which the name of Tolstoy has evoked in all lands. They have become wearisome and overwritten, for not only was the old man discursive but so were all his relatives and friends. Not only did he record every incident in his own life and every thought he ever thought about himself or others, but others have heaped up all they thought or remembered.

Some brief record of that prolonged and prodigious existence is due, but not to the extent which has been imposed on the world. Men of Letters have a tremendous advantage over posterity. Propaganda in the past was ecclesiastical. In the present it has been wholly political, but in the far future it will belong to those who have known how to write themselves into literature.

In many ways Tolstoy lived the life of thousands of his Russian contemporaries. He was human, ambitious and erring like thousands of his class in every European country. He was not the first child to imagine a scheme for ruling the world. Every Messiah or Universal Provider must have had similar thoughts at some time. He was not the only undergraduate to fail at the University or to develop lazy and irregular hours. His third year found him immersed in Montesquieu but he withdrew to his heritage of serfs deep in the country and made his home the base for future studies.

Trailing the milestones of his life, the reader like an explorer is always watching for the first sign that marked him so completely unique and different from all other Russians and indeed from all others of the human race. Accordingly, the reader trails and trails through unceasing books and biographies and is left asking the question: What was the essential difference? It must lie in his genius.

He and his brothers sought the secret of happiness not in a blue bird, but on a green stick which they buried in the woods.

He gave himself the appearance of a prig endeavouring to turn himself into a prodigy. He tried to learn medicine, languages, the arts and agriculture. He would have been blissfully happy with an *Encyclopædia Britannica*.

Education in Russia always had a fascination lacking in England, as so many subjects were forbidden or frowned upon by the Czardom and the Holy Synod.

His ambition was to learn everything and to help everybody. The note of intense, bubbling, aggressive humanitarianism was struck early, but there have been many who have tried to cast away rank and fortune in order to assist those born to darkness and misery.

He possessed incalculable strengths, mental, sexual and

physical. He crushed the hours of youth into a crowded programme. He prepared himself to live a life for his peasants, which was the last thing they expected or wanted from their master. His early idealism can be traced in his writing. He described himself in *The Morning of a Country Squire* and it will be the same self he will describe to the end. One wonders whether he lived his life to make his own copy or wrote his books as a chart to steer his life.

He declared himself his brother's keeper. The sights he had seen amongst the serfs had stricken him as they struck the good Lord Shaftesbury in Victorian days. Both set out to wrestle against vice, poverty, cruelty, superstition. Shaftesbury was an Evangelical. Tolstoy became one, but something very much more Oriental. There was a romance about him. He descended among the stricken serfs like a Fairy Prince and, though in the end he indulged in the same platitudinous preaching, he carried out his Gospel to the literal end. Shaftesbury succeeded in causing legislation on behalf of miners and toilers, but he never flung aside the dress of respectability or ceased to be an ornament of the House of Lords.

The world was fascinated by Tolstoy in his rough peasant dress, living a life utterly shorn of luxury and even of many necessities. But there have been many ascetics who have starved and worked themselves to penury. There have been hermits and naturalists who have struggled to live with Nature. Thousands of reformers have stripped themselves in order to proclaim the Will of God. All these things Tolstoy accomplished, but what was the magic that lifted him above them all in human history and left only St. Francis and the Buddha above him in the esteem of mankind?

He set himself to accomplish two dreams of his childhood. He had imagined the secret for making wars to cease, and he felt it was possible to love all people at once. He certainly proposed a dull manner of world: History without conflicts, and love without passion or romance.

He began with his own peasants, whom he ordered to be educated and made free at least to his thinking. But no gratitude was his. They only admired strength of body and

only obeyed the whip. The failure of the experiment filled him with despair and he passed to the fine life of Moscow and Petersburg. He became a dandy and even sent his washing to Holland. It was part of the vanity which made him a showman all his life. It was consoling to gamble and even to lose heavily, for gambling did not lower him in the eyes of noble or peasant. He wrote rules for card-playing. He studied gambling, like thousands of gamblers in the past, and invented a slow cast-iron system. But inspiration was always breaking through, and again and again he lost money. So little was money-making his genius that he one day cheerfully cast it out of his life.

The military career seemed to offer success and power. Bodily strength, vanity, horsemanship all pointed to the Army. Fate herself was making suggestions. He nearly joined the Imperial Guard when it was marching on Hungary. He nearly accompanied a relative departing on a Staff to Siberia. He kept himself always in magnificent trim. Gymnasium by day balanced an indulgence in gypsies by night: "The gay descendants of the illustrious Pharaohs". Then he pulled himself together in one of his fierce recalls to conscience. Women and smoking were deposed from his life. Already he was passing to periods of prayer from bouts of pleasure. On his estate he had seigneur's right to order a pretty serf to be brought to him as simply as putting a mare under his saddle. One thing saved him from debauchery in Society. He possessed a remarkable ugliness. His atrocious nose had as lasting a result on his fate as Cleopatra's on history. The fair ladies, he noted, kept "garments of bronze" in his direction: a kind of moral "iron curtain". He even hoped that syphilis would come to cave in his nose.

By 1851 he must find an outlet. He joined in the Caucasian Campaign. A small people stood between Russia and the sea, not for the first or last time. Tolstoy floated down the Volga building up his increasing purpose. Seeking the splendid outdoor life, he spent two years amongst officers to whom fighting, loot, drink and women were part of the day's work. The experiences were all saved for the pen, for his sword and pen worked simultaneously.

Amid the Cossacks he comes into his own and can show such a feat as lifting a fellow on his hands. Out of the roughness he collects his literary sustenance. All is grist to his literary mill: but beside the pleasures of style and self-expression his conscience begins to scream in a Diary. Bravery of body is accompanied by introspection of spirit. He stares and stares into that paper mirror which so many of the company of Narcissus have inked from St. Augustine to Rousseau. It was Benjamin Franklin actually who taught Tolstoy to keep a moral Diary: that vermin-board on which the great Sensitives have exhibited their sins of stomach or sex. The Diary took the place of a Confessor with Tolstoy.

In the mid 'fifties came the Crimean War. This untoward breakage of peace was a turning point for three famous persons at least: the Emperor Nicolas, who died of chagrin, Miss Nightingale and Tolstoy, who became a hero of the War. Once more he lived the double life of sword and pen. He fought in a perilous bastion and he wrote, showing that his emotions could combine with his intellect. Thousands had the same emotions and hundreds his intellect, but he could bring them into the one flame. This is the real receipt for genius and the new Emperor Alexander II recognised it. He gave orders that Tolstoy's life was not to be lost. Russia owed that at least to Czardom.

The war was over and the glamour of Western culture radiated upon the strictly disciplined Orient. In politics and religion Russia turned her back towards what was variously called progress or Liberalism. Literature was the crude outlook for her mind and that was restricted to a very small company at the head of which reigned Turgenev. Travel was a noble's privilege. Tolstoy went farther afield than the salons of Moscow and Petersburg. He reached Paris and London. In Paris he was horribly moved by a visit to Napoleon's tomb in the Invalides—"the deification of a criminal"—but less so by the execution of a real criminal on the guillotine. London was not so exciting but he heard Palmerston speak and Dickens lecture and attended a lecture in South Kensington, one wonders about what?

Writing had come to him as easily as riding or mental introspection.

He had read Rousseau, Stendhal and Dickens. His reading told him he could achieve books in his own manner. The first ray of genius gleamed in his account of *Childhood*, which the Emperor read to his wife with tears.

The Caucasus filled his mind with the characters that are so necessary to writers. The Crimea inspired him to write *Sebastopol in December* which stirred Czar and Society.

Tolstoy sold his country house, leaving only the wings, to finance a magazine for the troops. He was dismayed by the corruption and asked whether officers were being shot in the back by their own men. The war was fantastically mis-managed on both sides. Owing to the badness of their maps they could seldom get to grips!

War was only an episode in his life but it seethed in his brain—the literary description of war—the protest against any war at all. He was politically combative, challenging Church and Society, other landowners and writers—even poor old Turgenev. For times they were friends and there was a delicious scene when Tolstoy and Turgenev made a see-saw to amuse the children. Turgenev opened his arms to Tolstoy as a fatherly friend, but Tolstoy was already simmering with ideas far beyond staid Liberalism. He instantly attacked Turgenev and the Liberal Aristocrats, who were little less than the Whigs in English politics. If he intended to throw up his place in the aristocratic class, he had no intention of becoming a complacent bourgeois. He would become a peasant or nothing. There was a futile quarrel with his literary nurse followed by challenges to a duel. One wonders would a duel between Dickens and Thackeray have brought them back to friendship? In the end Turgenev could only watch Tolstoy from afar like an outraged hen watching her brilliant but ugly duckling.

He could not abide Turgenev's well-meant supervision, though he was a keen admirer. When Tolstoy wrote the *Story of a Horse*, Turgenev went so far as to believe his spirit had been once incarcerated in one. He was breaking into

bud with more than short stories. Huge masterpieces were moving through the dark recesses of his brain.

After many trials of the female sex, whom he treated alternately with horror and impulse, he married. He married but one woman and they remained together until the last days of his life. Marriage influenced him, checked and changed him far more than he cared to recognise. In Sonya he found his match emotionally. She was equally fierce and passionate, with a gift of hysteria which he could only parallel by his excitable mysticism. He put her immediately to the sternest test. He gave her, as an innocent girl, his introspective Diaries of orgy to read. She staggered but survived into matrimony. It was not surprising that she took to writing overwrought Diaries herself. It was her only self-defence.

Sonya brought fecundity and jealousy into the home. Strong and staunch, she could not bear even her own silly suspicions and disguised herself as a peasant woman to see if her husband would accost her in the woods. His Diaries haunted her. But she meant well and did better, for she suffered his sexual assaults and his morose reactions from the marriage bed with equal submission. She was strong and lively, turning somersaults or copying his growingly untidy manuscripts. She wrote silently and unceasingly for him like the perfect literary wife.

Amid the enforced silence of servants and children the great books were being built. The writing of *Peace and War* dominated those years. The Artist had asserted himself in his mind and he desired perfection, hence the unending deletions and alterations. A great Master's manuscript is like a battlefield, with the ink splashed like blood and sentences broken like the soldiers' limbs. Sonya never tired of writing and rewriting the mass of script.

He proposed to write Russia's Epic, the whole history of the country since 1805, covering the invasion by Napoleon and the reigns of Alexander I and Nicolas I into the Crimean War. By now he knew he was a writer supremely. A horse had once jolted him into the unconscious, out of which he had returned inspired to write Russia's book. Spain, Italy and England seem to outsiders countries of one book:

Quixote, Dante or Shakespeare. National or historical characters live in stereotypes of style, upon which the national languages rest. It was so with Tolstoy. Hurling himself into archive and memoir, Tolstoy recreated Russia's greatest hours. Heroes and characters were lifted out of mausoleum or mud and made to move like living marionettes, but that did not suffice. Real flesh and blood were needed. He threw his family into the inkpot. The character of "Natasha" is composed of the protesting Sonya and her sister Tanya. Tolstoy himself moves through his novel as Prince Vezukhov, not the first or the last of the many aliases of his pen.

To compare dead and living History, compare Tolstoy's *War and Peace* with Gardiner's slow, minutely factual volumes describing the years of the Civil War. Tolstoy took six volumes to describe eight years. He was no more able to reach the Crimea than Macaulay was able to reach the wars of Marlborough. He was weighed down by his mass of material, out of which he cut living scenes. Compare Stendhal's slight and personal sketch of Waterloo with Tolstoy's panorama of Borodino: one of those fatal battles which clash from epoch to epoch between the East and the West. Between East and West? Marathon, Lepanto, Sebastopol, Stalingrad.

The result of the book was prodigious. Russia recognised herself and the world slowly realised the greatest of novels had been written. There was a torrent of criticism, foamed with glittering praise. The reading population of Russia was divided into conflict. The Liberals found it reactionary: the reactionaries the reverse. Bourbon aristocrats refuse to learn to go forward, but Liberals never know how to take a sweeping glance back. Both are consumed in their present futilities. History moves above and beyond their tumid conflicts. All the great writers tread upon contemporary politics. Henceforth Tolstoy knew that he was great amongst the greatest. He had shown that History is not enslaved to the Dictators but the reverse: Dictators are tossed by event.

The old house at Ysnaya Polyana had been sold but it was rebuilt to house Tolstoy's married life. Brain and brawn were equally vigorous and he lived the life of lover and

husband, peasant and proprietor, reader and writer all together and all to crescendo. His strength was hurled into production: child was begotten upon child while new books gripped his thoughts.

He had attempted to thrust a hundred years of Russian history into a single novel, but even Tolstoy had stumbled over the years. He turned round to tell the tragedy of a woman's life: a hundred months, a hundred days of *Anna Karenina*. There was no lady like her since *Emma Bovary* had disturbed the sacred curtain that concealed European woman. Since Balzac no writer had measured the feminine shallows with so fine a pen.

A slight incident made the literary source. A neighbour's mistress was found mutilated on the railway. The Society machine had taken her soul and the passing train conveniently killed her body. Tolstoy surveyed the pathetic remains. Out of them he took blood and flesh to live again and a heart to beat, break and passionise. All Russia that could read, read the book which an iron will, combined with delicate psychology, filled to the last page. The Russia of the 'seventies made the background: Russia, the whole Russia and nothing but Russia. The writing world recognised that their master had come and they collapsed. A corner of *Vanity Fair* had been picked up and intensified by a giant. *Anna Karenina* gives herself to Vronsky, the lover, who really prefers steeple-chasing and really made one with his horse not with her. Anna passes into remorse and jealousy: two acids which eat quickly into the unguarded heart. Her suicide is a last attempt to haunt, if she cannot hold her lover. Pitiful but not guilty is Tolstoy's conception of her frail heart, but he sets the terrible motto over the book—"Vengeance is mine: I will repay".

Tolstoy cannot resist joining in the social fray under the alias of Levin, whose romance with the Princess reflects his own love-making and married life. The Princess like Sonya flits like a satin-winged butterfly in Moscow till she becomes the property of her lover. Scenes of childbirth follow such as even the Classics had not portrayed. The birth of her first child is as great an event in the book as it was at Ysnaya Polyana.

War and Peace was as static as History. His war characters were taken from the statuary of the age-great names in Russia's history.

Peace flowed back like a softly penetrating tide over the weeds and wrecks. The dead buried the dead and the past was sealed unalterably with them. The vast book was more than a Classic. It was like the immense cloud overhanging Russia's soul.

Anna Karenina might have been a living piece, which Balzac might have left behind on his Polish trip, as though some of the *Comédie Humaine* had survived and picked up Russian speech and clothes. The novel of human society was made from a different mould from the colossal *Peace and War*: as different as a conversation-piece is from a military cemetery. It was full of the anxieties and excitements which are undying to the human race: the conflicts which are not settled by the plans of a General or placated by Treaties. In the Crimea Tolstoy had realised that Generals were all swept by the storm of events which they tried to ride as unridiculously as possible. But people like *Anna Karenina* made their own storm, and perished therein—even though it were a storm of the teacups.

During these years he rested his happiness on country life in his family. Though he demanded the impossible from marriage he was no doubt the Levin of *Anna Karenina*. This was his greatest power, the magic of transporting phases of real life into the finest literature—squeezing the wild grapes into bottles of Tokay. The delightful scene of Natasha's first Ball in *Peace and War* reflects the night when Tolstoy took his sister to a Ball at Tula given for Alexander III.

It was something to know he was ever happy. Though humour died out his life, he had dearly loved a frolic and there are rare records of practical joking. To amuse the children he crawled in attired as a bear. He was delighted when his daughters visited him dressed as wailing supplicants.

And now begins the search and research for self and God. The historic theme had been exhausted. The heart of woman has been surveyed from the gay to the gruesome. There is something finite and recurrent about them all. But the great

adventure lies in the unknown. What is the unpredictable destiny of Leo Tolstoy? Above all what is he to make of the God that made him? To his wife's dismay he gave up art to solve existence. She had chosen a literary hero but he insisted on becoming a peasant and making shoes. Like a soul uncertain of its terminus, good or evil, he has started on the long journey which will be closed forty years later.

During life he lost faith in everything: not only in traditional creeds but in the Liberalism and Socialism for which the choice spirits of Russia accepted martyrdom. Materialism he disdained. There must be a morality outside of Churches. There must be a God outside the Universe, stern, pitiful, impulsive perhaps and not unlike Tolstoy himself. It was something to be able to recreate God in his own image: temporary of course but leading him to the eternal model.

He seemed destined to endure perpetual unhappiness and never to be comforted by the prodigious literary success. He was writing for all the Russias, for the Continents, for the Planet. One pinch of religious Faith would have been so helpful. He fell back upon the prophet of empty pessimism, upon Schopenhauer. It was like using a hair of the mad dog to cure madness. It only left him angry that he could not find a single reason for existence. It was like climbing a rope and trying to hang oneself as soon as one reached the top. He never rose further or higher than Nihilism. The word had been already stolen by the Anarchists from the philosophers. It made a splendid *panache* for them to flout the good God. But if nought was nought, then there was no God to be rude to. Honest blasphemy like the Black Mass was a furious recognition of the existence of God. *Ex nihilo nihil fit*. So Nihilism was no good.

Eventually Tolstoy came nearer to the great Nihilists like the Ecclesiastes of the Bible and the Buddha of Nirvana. He had not yet searched the Scriptures nor dreamed that the Ecclesiast had attained the end of that philosophy or that Solomon in the *Song of Songs* had found peace in sensuality.

Yet he should have been happy. Everything he wrote increased his fame. Every orgy with his wife produced a child, or the inspiration of a chapter. But he was not content

with the happy family life. Neighbours, serfs, farm-stock, crops and hunting made up a world of interests and good living. His very ideas were progressing abroad, for the Czar Alexander II freed the serfs. A gentle shudder crossed the surface of Russian life as Tolstoy began to develop his Gospel to the bitter end.

But too often he quailed before his own thoughts. Was his life a sham? Was God deceiving him? Others in all ages have had these devastating ideas and turned into a woman's arms for oblivion or cast their mental lava into the moulds of Art. Gambling or sport offered lower levels of outlet. When Tolstoy sank, he sank as deeply as he could into the slough of melancholia. Of course there was the immediate solution by suicide and for that reason he gave up hunting. There were times when he had to keep himself at a distance from instruments of sudden death. It was easier to recollect how many fools and silly women had chosen that escape.

He worked as though the only certain possibility was that Life was the prolonged last day of a criminal who had been sentenced by an unknown Judge for an unknown crime. There was not time to read a quarter of the best books or to study enough to attain solutions. No wonder that so many abandoned work and worry and accepted the little luxuries their living allowed.

But whether Life is a fragment, a second of Eternity or a measure of Time, Tolstoy rushed from Philosophy to Literature, from Literature to Science and back again from Science to Literature and Philosophy. But answer there was none. He questioned the Eternal of Eternity and was baulked eternally. For long the God he questioned seemed to be himself, but with careful research he persuaded himself there was an exterior God. In a despairing moment he adopted the Faith of the peasants as well as their clothes. Their Faith in God he accepted without their Church. It was not enough to write his Confession like St. Augustine. He produced his new Faith. It was simply non-Resistance to Evil. Accordingly he implored Alexander III to spare his father's murderers but the Czar let him know he would only pardon an attempt on his own life.

He never passed any further, neither forward or backwards, even at the end when he clearly doubted God's faith in himself, Leo Tolstoy.

His religious attitude was simple but he could not remain silent and he became insufferable to his family. However much the angels rejoice in heaven over the public return of one misbeliever, his neighbours on earth can be needlessly bored or distracted.

He once clothed himself in the white garment of a neophyte in the Orthodox Church only to tear it to shreds. To his destructive mind dogmas were skittles, and once overthrown, they could lie in the Devil's Alley.

When he turned himself to grapple with the Scriptures like a humble Hercules, there was the chance that he might create for the Russian folk what Luther had done for the German. The great writer, the burning reformer and the passionate searcher for truth combined in Tolstoy, but the Russian Bible was not achieved. It is true the message interested him more than the literary form of the message. Having dissected Theology, he analysed the Greek of the New Testament: but he was unfitted to be a theologian or a scholar. He made his own gospel and supplied his own rectifications. St. Paul's amazing appendix to the Gospels had added force and fervour but Tolstoy's fervour only diluted them and finally dehydrated Christianity as religion. He made it into a hysterical gesture. He railed and ranted like all the preachers. He reduced the whole to skin and bones and then filled the frame from his own bloodless soul. He fell for Gospel upon the single injunction to resist no Evil. It is the quintessence of the Nihilist, and is best met by the suggestion that if assassination should not be punished by death, the assassins should commence themselves by meting out less final punishment to their victims.

Like all reformers he turned upon his own family. They had to suffer his beliefs whether they could bring themselves to believe or not. Sonya was never out of domestic harness. She struggled with children and tutors, potatoes and receipts: the housewife graduating to matriarch. But she was married to a patriarch, not unlike the Old Testament variety, and

SALUTATION TO FIVE

she was never allowed to hold her head high or to insist on an opinion. While her lord wrestled with God at the mystic ford, her place was at the sink. She was sick of his religion, but like the true Oriental wife she was still sick with love, but self-perfection meant rejecting family.

From time to time he descended from his Godlike perch, wrote, thought and preached no more. The flesh, which he had temporarily discounted, recalled him to his aching sense of lust. The Godhead had to wait till he satisfied his manhood. Sonya was extraordinarily patient and only prayed he should not suffer anxiety during her pregnancies.

The spirit of the Great Renunciation was always upon him. Every time the dregs of sensualism were cleared up and the proud body mortified at the tail end of the plough, the world was informed. Property was disowned. Meat and liquor and tobacco were rejected. The Gospel teaching was followed in all its strictness. Human cheeks, he preached, were made to be slapped not kissed. It was the veritable teaching of Christ. As for drink—"the first Distiller is the Devil".

If at one time he found himself surrendering to the fear of death, he defeated that fear by making life a more unpleasant alternative. The sweets of family life were sinful and could only be reconciled with Christian life by dragging wife and children to beggary. Walking barefoot and wearing peasant's dress revolted them, but gradually they learned to submit. Mowing took the place of croquet. He was full of the Evangelical idea that aristocrats should shovel in the streets and gladly performed chores in the house. His family were always a trouble, for he discovered what Hermits and Stylites (who affected a wretched life on the tops of columns) had already discovered: that basic Christianity was incompatible with family life, especially with a strong-minded wife.

Sonya held out all the time. This was not Christianity: this was not decent human life in her opinion. As she wrote, "for him washing is an event". There were intervals when the relentless ascetic consented to live in Moscow and hold a court of literary vanity amid the fleshpots and inkpots of the great City. Disciples and disputants, admirers and cranks thronged his levee. The poor Countess breathed the

atmosphere of adulation. She felt that she had married a great man. He himself excused this return to Society as the only possible means of proselytising his friends. He might be Lot paying a seasonal visit to Sodom. And there was Lot's wife looking back at the town life she was giving up! To keep the family circle intact, it was necessary to make some surrender to their worldliness. The dreamers, the crazy, the simple of soul flocked around him. He brought a fellow-prophet to preach in the elegant drawing rooms. It is extraordinary how much the readers of his books were prepared to endure. Were Ruskin, William Morris or Bernard Shaw allowed to take such liberties in the salons of London?

Ever seeking new miseries, Tolstoy visits the slums of Moscow and suffers a humanitarian crisis. He decides frankly that wealth is simply theft from the poor. He returns to the fields and forests and forces himself to go poor more violently than ever. His enormous strength enables him to cut wood in the mountain, to work in the fields and struggle with house-work. Clothes become coarser and his daughters have to wear the shoes he makes for them. He insists on peasants' food and drinks tea in their fashion. Sonya submits but scolds him for wanting to play Robinson Crusoe.

Unfortunately, like all the Prophets, he lost all sense of humour, but the advertising value was enormous. The land gossiped about his eccentricity. Many reviled him, some believed and all who could, made themselves acquainted with his books. As a novelist, preacher and social comedian he seemed in the first rank. But to his family he was a wearisome bore tending to create tragedy. Sonya fought for her children, their rights and comforts. However much they quarrelled, they never split the roof-tree. She only asked to hold the purse-strings before every kopek was scattered. In the end she allowed herself to be subdued and he began to make converts in his own family. His daughter Tanya was the first, but Sonya remained suspicious that the new life undermined her position. She became jealous no longer of women but of men, the disciples, "the dark people", who began to arrive on all sides. They only asked to become peasants but their doctrines were Communism, vague and overwhelming

in simplicity as Communism was, before it had been regulated by Marx. She asked angrily whether they wanted to break her wedding ties? and with a flash of the bitterest irony: "Perhaps this too is Christianity?"

Tolstoy himself seemed to have loosened any sacred bond, for after walking away as a tramp he returned to upbraid her guilty of holding him in sin, to which he returned in his physical anguish. He alluded to his children as his sins ever before him.

When his daughters entered into happy marriages, he treated them as though they had taken to some kind of drugs. Marriage marred the perfect life.

By this time not his books and teachings only were public fare. All the emotions, feuds and follies of Ysnaya Polyana were widely reported over Russia. Thousands of Russians watched him working out his soul. Was it not the Russian soul he was leading through the torture of contradictions to redemption? Like a great Polar explorer, who takes the ambitions, adventures and endurances imagined by the public on his own shoulders; Tolstoy became the great Pilgrim struggling towards the Pole that Russian reformers dreamed. He knew by now he was in search of God; Communism, Christian asceticism, poverty were only stages on the road. He was their "Little Father", but he was engaged on the mighty process of reaching the Great Father himself.

Everything was shed on the road: his class, his property, his married life and his rights as a human being. He could not find or see God, but he accepted the peasant as a substitute and laid everything at his feet. To reach God necessitated becoming a peasant. This was at least the first and easiest step. Disciples had no difficulty in throwing up the complications and unhappinesses of civilised life, commerce, army or trade in order to be at peace with themselves.

Colonies of Christian Communism begin to form in different corners of Russia. These Slavic Quakers refused the aid of laws or police or banks. Officers and landlords laid down their wealth. But without organisation most of them came to nothing. The peasants could not resist stealing the attractive farm gear, which the new tillers of the soil brought

with them. There was the additional temptation that the owners declined to prosecute. Tolstoy himself suffered agonies when peasants were imprisoned for stealing his timber. He wished them only to be frightened and then forgiven.

Tolstoy never minced words or sheathed a phrase in velvet. The thirst for wealth was "the thirst of fleas hurrying to a pile of vomit", he insisted. If property was theft, then writing for money was prostitution. Violent discussions arose with his family when he proposed giving away his writings to the publishers. They could only endure the privations of the life he ordained for them by the thought of the vast profits which his writings produced. In the end he made over his property to the insistent Sonya. It was a compromise but then Marriage itself was a compromise with sensuality and "sin". Yet the Tolstoy household continued. Sonya kept it together with her threats including the possibility that she would follow the end of *Anna Karenina*.

Tolstoy defied the hugest giants as his enemies. No Quixote had ever yet threatened to destroy not only War but the State. War was simply the clash of "professional assassins". The State waged War and therefore must be destroyed. God said so. Christianity said so. Tolstoy said so. Liberalism with all its padded bourgeois life he had long dismissed, but Socialism was no better, because it scorned the mighty Christian weapon of passive resistance. It was no use offering material promises which could not be fulfilled. Hatred would not destroy oppression. Envy could not sap the rich.

Prophecy streaked his condemnations and in this he lived up to the type of all Messiahs, even the greatest. He foretold the coming of the most abominable of tyrannies: that of the depraved and ignorant worker. Even a Socialist State was wrong, as it conveyed a moral contradiction in that it countenanced prisons. As a Utopian Christian he called for non-resistance instead of Revolution.

Theory never ceased to entangle him in practice. When famine had broken out and Christian practice required practical measures, he felt at a loss. Money was poured upon him but he believed it was wrong to touch money, which was the

vomit disgorged by the rich. The hungry should be loved not fed. Having conquered this repulsion he organised funds and feeding transport. Thousands of starving peasants were kept alive by this contradiction, for to Tolstoy the rich were feeding the poor with food the poor grew for the rich. The whole world had answered his appeal, for his trumpet was international. The Government did not enjoy their own sores and failures being trumpeted abroad. The Imperial orders were that "failure of crops" should be mentioned but not a word of famine. They also were striving to correct facts with phrases.

Nobody understood the Russian peasant better than Tolstoy. If he deified him as part of his theory, he could vilify him as an animal in Literature. His *Stories of the People* are matured work, for after he had cleansed the temple of Art he was bound to provide some substitute. Here again his Genius offered splendid assistance. He had hurled Drama, even the name of Shakespeare, down the drain. In return he produced *The Powers of Darkness*, a play in which peasants pass through animality into crime. Darkness is the word indeed, but the shadow is poised as artistically as the "clear-obscure" of Rembrandt. The light streams from heaven when the peasant-criminal confesses sin. The masterpiece was read aloud to the peasants themselves whose comment was, "More fool he!" They could not understand the yearning for inner peace at the cost of domestic disturbance.

The play fell under the Censorship until it was read aloud to the Emperor. None dared applaud or revile in the audience until the Emperor spoke: "A wonderful play!" and it immediately became a part of Russia's literary heritage.

The Powers of Darkness was a grim name for a Pastoral play, but a Russian Pastoral can only be ghastly. The preacher, who made the peasant the model of his life and labour, was also the flaming artist who drew this terrible revelation. When it had uncovered all its bestial squalor, the ray of divine light seemed too late.

From the peasant speech and the peasant religion he stood aside and as an artist only he gibbeted the living peasant to

whose levels he had descended. As a consolation he added the convulsions of conscience. Perhaps he was only depicting himself again, at least as he would have been, had he been peasant born.

No portrayer of the peasant ever delved so deep or ruminated such horrors.

The *Playboy of the Western Shore* was a light comedy in comparison. Synge glorified the dialect of the Irish peasant, and left him pirouetting in comic misunderstanding. If he had attempted to apply *The Powers of Darkness* to Connaught, the Irish audience would have left the Abbey Theatre smouldering. Hardy in his portrayal of an Unmerry England never dared take his characters into the depths sometimes revealed at Assizes. But Tolstoy descended into the Well of Truth and dragged her out of the muddy sediment, naked and horribly unashamed. Truth, that can be all lovely, can also be all hideous. Only, as the Emperor remarked at the close of the reading—"A wonderful play!"

Peace and War remains Tolstoy's superb and greatest achievement, for from beginning to end it is a work of art. He is one with History, one with life, one with Russia when he writes the mighty screed. Literary masterpieces may follow, but they are also stained by the extrovert and even more by the controvert. The voice crying in the wilderness, the embittered preacher, the frustrated teacher made havoc of the *Kreutzer Sonata* and *Resurrection*. They remain splendid enough, but the writer was on the war path. The curse of sex made even the happiness of marriage into a mirage. He hurled himself as rancorously (and with less reason) as Swift against the whole sexualism of man and woman. He continued to hate the woman he loved as a wife. Only in hours of temperamental need would he even speak to her. All this disorder passed into the glowing *Kreutzer Sonata*. Poor Sonya felt she was attacked and degraded by the book. In return she pluckily wrote a novel to hurl back blame on her husband—but publication was prevented. By a real exercise of Christian forgiveness she sped to Petersburg to persuade the Emperor to lift the censorship which had naturally befallen the *Sonata*.

Herein Tolstoy painted sexual jealousy to the life. The *Sonata* itself was the exquisite music played by a violinist, whose violin gave the last touch needed to fire the sensuality of a woman. She becomes the lover of the musician and when surprised by her husband suffers death for her sin. Music had powers upon Tolstoy which he resented, and he attacks it as furiously as he attacks all forms of sensuality. It seems as though in his madness he demanded total chastity in marriage. Even the consummation of marriage was the sin leading to the direct results. But the Apostle of this stern self-sacrifice appears to be over-sexed himself. With agonised heart he held the front-line of icy self-restraint only to fall back into occasional self-reproaching retreat. Retreat was merely a return into the arms of his wife who continued to avenge herself by satisfying his passion. It was no doubt very Russian, especially as both gave the fullest vent to their emotions on paper. No doubt many a married couple could write such contradictions and hostilities if they wished to expose themselves to Posterity. As a result many readers know more about the Tolstoy matrimony than about their own private lives.

Resurrection was the delivery of his soul, a superb novel only spoilt by querulous preaching before the close. It was taken partly from an incident in his own life and partly from another's. In his bitterly-repentant youth he had seduced a servant girl who was cast out of the home to perish. Another seducer recognised a victim of his own while serving as a juryman, visited her in prison and offered marriage to repair his fault. She died of typhus in the real story, but Tolstoy made the ideal version into a lantern for the world. He portrayed himself in the rôle of both seducers and condemned himself to follow the girl on the road to Siberia. It was as though a great artist wrote a Tract and enlarged it into an adventure of pity and beauty. His perpetual theme returned: darkness breaking into light. Out of the horrors of prostitution, crime and Siberian exile he drew the splendid scene of the girl's resurrection, rewon by a man's love after destruction by his lust. *O felix culpa!*

Resurrection came nearest to an autobiography or at least to

the life of heroic self-sacrifice which Tolstoy had wished, perhaps wilfully, for himself. "I am all in *Resurrection*" were his own words.

In *Resurrection* Tolstoy faced the great Social Problem, or as it is more romantically described—The White Slave Traffic. Greater than he had grappled with it in vain. No doubt Christ had given the terrible problem its quietus but in sentences of perfection which left the normal man to despair. Tolstoy was struggling to fulfil those stark words out of which all Christian asceticism has been built. Those who made themselves eunuchs for the Kingdom of God were commended. It was certainly the Tolstoyan ideal. Likewise He commended the gentle and generous treatment of women whom men had made to transgress—the woman of Samaria—the woman that was a sinner in the city—the Lady of the Town called Magdala.

But the divine teaching did not prevent the continuance of Prostitution as part of life in Christendom. Women were enslaved and destroyed down the ages. No State was able to regulate and no Church to outlaw the shadow which overhung womanhood. The whole of modern Prostitution plagued the spirit of Tolstoy and, once he had won the ear of the world, he plucked the great evil and thrust it into the face of civilisation.

Christianity was his solution and *Resurrection* was his way and means. The pathetic pilgrimage of the hero into the snowy wilds following the lost one struck a note of sentimentality, but it was a Christianised version of the Abbé Prevost's famous scene when the Chevalier de Grioux followed Manon to the convict lines of New Orleans.

Tolstoy's book was less a work of art than the story of Manon, for the *Abbé* conveyed no moral, only exposed the crucifixion which could be brought about by Love. But Tolstoy wanted every prostitute redeemed, if possible by her first seducer. The means should be sheer love and nobility on the part of men but what men will ever scour the streets or sack the brothels? Modern Christianity has compromised. The utility and necessity of the vast system is accepted by the State under a cloak of hypocrisy or a series of shuffling by-laws

and medical regulations. Religious Institutions are provided to help and harbour the infinitesimal small proportion of wrecks that can be drawn into their gates. The public conscience is thus salved, but not Tolstoy's and he cast aside the attitude of the Churches with scorn. Unfortunately he could not restrain his pen in *Resurrection* from inscribing a bitter parody of the Holy Liturgy. It brought him the excommunication of the Orthodox Church. From henceforward the Holy Synod was his watching enemy. Already the Emperor had been pressed to imprison him in a monastery. But civil governors are often wiser than the children of ecclesiastical light. The Emperor refused to make a martyr of the prophet, and for all practical purposes Tolstoy was protected indirectly by the Imperial power till the hour of his death.

From time to time the spirit of the Buddha was upon him. He never had the peace of mind to become "the Light of Russia", but he went threatening to leave (and incidentally relieve) his protesting family for ever. He was influenced by the Hindu custom of retiring to the woods at the age of sixty in order to search for God. At least he could not bear to devote his last years "to gossip and tennis"! He sought the inner change which no outside revolution or political reversion could bring.

In the West he would have become a silent Trappist or a self-immured Carthusian monk, but in the East he felt called to take the part of a Messiah, if he could only be rid of his family, of his estates, of his income. He was involved in the tentacles of the Society he was trying to destroy.

The extraordinary thing is that he was never able to cut himself away until the very end when there was no life to return to. He wrote letters of farewell and made agonised scenes like those annual farewells which Prima Donnas force upon their sobbing audiences. Nevertheless he remained at Ysnaya Polyana. It was easier to express himself by the pen and another remarkable play, *The Light Shines in Darkness*, described himself and his sufferings. It is not difficult to recognise the wails of Sonya to her impossible mate: "You love the whole world including the drunken but you hate

your family and me. How Christian!" So it is, for it is written that except a man hate his father and mother, he cannot . . . Art he dethroned. Chekhov could only laugh when he wrote: "I cannot abide Shakespeare but your plays are even worse!"

He began to look on his own masterpieces as rubbish. All his artistry had been used to draw readers into his preaching circle. There he had nothing to offer except the path that was stern and the field that was sterile. He refused to write any more fascinating novels, comparing himself to the old courtesan who declines to return to old and pleasing ways. Philosophy, preaching and pestering were the final occupations of his pen.

He never ceased acquiring subjects which he regurgitated in ink. He read and reread the literature of Europe. He vomited Shakespeare and Wagner. He suddenly learnt Dutch as he had once guzzled Greek. He mastered medicine and studied diseases, not without making mistakes in his writing. In only two spheres he treads surely—in that of mystic annihilation and in his knowledge of the hearts of women. These he understands almost as God understands them. He is still the unsurpassable author of *Anna Karenina* and the *Kreutzer Sonata*. They will survive him when all his teaching has failed and he himself has found personal nothingness. And this thought he hated as though he suspected that he would be remembered only as a writer and disdained as a prophet. When Gorki spoke of him as an old sorcerer, he had the artist in view. On the lowest level human beings prefer conjuring tricks to all the storming and shouting of the Saints. A conjuror of word and phrase, a magician of letters, the fashioner of tales which the human race will carry away down the ages—he shall be immortal. But not the voice crying in the wilderness, for in the wilderness there is no echo.

His list of writers was not entirely crankery. There were famed figures who corresponded with him like Shaw and Edison or actually reached him like William Bryan, Masyrak or Romain Rolland.

He decided that Shaw had more brains than were good for him. He allowed Edison to place his voice on the phonograph record but he approved Edison as a vegetarian.

He corresponded with Gandhi, an unknown agitator in South Africa, encouraging him as a disciple. In this manner his influence spread through the world.

Above all whom he most approved was Henry George, whose theory of land-tax seemed to solve the troubles of the peasant on one side and of the aching property-owner on the other. They believed in each other, Tolstoy and Henry George, but neither Mahomet nor the Mountain could ever reach each other.

It is difficult, of course, for Englishmen to appraise Tolstoy. It may prove simplest to draw parallels. What Napoleon was in France, what Byron was in England—Tolstoy was in Russia, although their professions and careers were utterly dissimilar. They were the three archetypes, by which the Continent understood their different countries. It is only a coincidence that Tolstoy should have made his masterpiece out of Napoleon's Russian campaign and that Byron should have admired the Emperor with an immense hero-worship. All three were desperate outlaws of the old Society and yet the pageants of their lives were followed with some of the admiring horror and dread with which a Greek play was heard in Athens. Napoleon was the romantic and sinister aftermath of the French Revolution. Byron was the Romantic Movement itself, which filled the gap between Waterloo and the Revolution of Forty-Eight. Tolstoy symbolised, prophesied and serenaded all the coming Russian Revolution of the present day. Lenin thought his pacificism obstructed the Revolution in 1905 but nevertheless he prepared the Russian mind for Communism. Amazed, admiring and horrified, other European thinkers thought and watched—those terrible ones. The men of property and orthodoxy quailed but believed in the pendulum of reaction. Certainly Napoleon was followed by the Bourbon and the continued triumph of the middle class. The Revolution was castrated by Waterloo. Byron's Romantic Raid against convention was submerged by Victorianism. The avalanche, unleashed by Tolstoy without knowing or suspecting what was ahead, has submerged half of Europe and all Russia. Not until it has reached bottom will it be possible to estimate the real

deluge or possibly the slow thaw. But Tolstoy's share in world upheaval cannot be unassumed. Who would deny that time has shown him to be Peter the Great—in sheep's clothing!

Byron could not resist appearing and reappearing in the same Byronic character that he had created for himself in *Childe Harold*, the *Corsair* or *Don Juan*. It was the same with Tolstoy, who was the hero of all his own novels. Both dragged their bleeding hearts across the gaze of Europe, one seeking the sinister in man and the other extracting all that was possible to extract from God. If one applauded the Devil and the other approached the Divine, both were left stranded in the end—and were compelled to make departures from the earthly scene which would disturb and agonise their readers. Neither could afford to die at home in bed and both escaped an embarrassing wife. Hate or love never seemed to make much difference to them as long as they were assured of the rapt attention of multitudes in every country. Byron's view was:

“ He who surpasses or subdues mankind
Must look on the hate of those below ”.

Tolstoy, no less a frenzied egotist, was content to surpass mankind in sheer sensational Christian behaviour. He looked down upon their love from the isolation of his pillar. Without the magic wand of literary genius, would either of them have ever passed beyond the ken of a small disgusted and flabbergasted neighbourhood? Would Byron have been more than a decayed dandy or Tolstoy more than a religious crank cranking in the snows? But Genius . . . Genius . . .

The day came when the last disciple arrived at Ysnaya Polyana, and perhaps modesty should add the least.

More than two score years have passed since I woke up and rubbed my dreaming eyes under Tolstoy's roof-tree. A good deal of water has flowed down the Volga since and many snows have joined the snows of 1907. So much has passed away including the great Russian Autocracy and when that Empire fell, all others followed. The world is now without

any Emperor for the first time since Caesar. The Russian State has been disembowelled. Ysnaya Polyana has been sacked and scattered, but Tolstoy has survived. The great historical question is to what extent his life and teachings loosened that Empire and contributed to a new Autocracy which would have granted him far less tolerance in his day. Somewhere in those woods he lies, where once a little snub-nosed boy played and dreamed that he would magically over-rule the world.

I had travelled southward from Moscow to Tula. I left the scene of the Kremlin wreathed in snows. In the early morning the great gilded domes of hundreds of churches rose above the white-shadowed streets and caught the rays of the rising sun. For awhile they resembled inverted bowls shot with fire. A pilgrim is bound to notice these things, for he does not pass the same way again. Amid the city of the Arabian Nights rose one Western building, the majestic four-square white-marbled Basilica which had been dedicated to the Saviour—who had delivered Russia from Napoleon. In splendid grandeur it commemorated the campaign that occupied the pages of *Peace and War*. Who could believe then that every stone of that Temple would be swept away—while the book endured? It looked a hundred times more lasting than the soaring towers and domes of iridescent gilt. At my feet lay the entire artillery park of the *Grande Armée*: not one gun of which had returned across the Beresina.

All roads in Russia lead to Moscow. Napoleon had passed this way and left his *carte de visite*, for every gun was wreathed with his cipher. The snow was falling and gently obliterating them once more as in 1812.

My pilgrimage was to Ysnaya Polyana and I started on a cold, miserable, lonely last lap—through the endless woods and plains. The perpetual view reminded me of a Grimm's Fairy Story. It must end in a Castle or a Giant or a Fairy Princess. It seemed utterly impossible that I should ever reach my destination. I sank into a loneliness of despair. I was travelling rapidly into the unknown. I had not been able to book to Ysnaya Polyana but I purchased a ticket to Tula after tipping an official dressed like a Field Marshal.

I found I had lost my ticket from Moscow before nightfall and prepared to explain that I was a pilgrim, a travelling student. Candles were lit in the slow old wooden coaches and smoothly we passed onward into the ever-falling snow. No one ever asked for my ticket. On the contrary a kind of mixed committee of officials and students (judging by their caps) investigated me kindly at every stop. I ceased to be lonely. I had become the object of general benevolence though there was neither speech nor language between us. Then I suddenly reflected—the kind official whom I had asked my way to Ysnaya Polyana must have realised for whom I was seeking. Word had passed down the train that yet another seeker was making his way there and perhaps the railwaymen were accustomed to absurd and helpless foreigners struggling to reach Tolstoy.

I left the train at Tula under direction. Porters and station officials were only too pleased to show me my way. Everybody was cheerful and voluble except myself. I was taken to another train and taken out. I was given information I could not understand and asked questions I could not answer. I think I broke the monotony of that day for numbers of Russians. An Irishman with a passport from Sir Edward Grey was a novelty. I used the passport in place of the lost ticket. I pointed to Sir Edward's signature and murmured, "*le grand Liberal Anglais*", for there was a froth of French amid the voices of my guides. I realised that I had fallen amongst friends who looked upon England as the lantern of the West: the source of Liberal institutions and the future enlightener of Russia. It was only while travelling amongst strangers that Russians would talk politics. English politics were an immense interest. I did my best to explain the Liberal Programme of 1906 which had swept the General Election the previous year—but Chinese Slavery in South Africa or Irish Home Rule seemed to ring no bell, though all I said was translated quickly to the crowd. Then I was asked about the greatest of all Englishmen. Who could it be but Darwin? I could claim to be at Darwin's University and I allowed the awestruck listeners to believe I had been if not the great man's colleague, at least a most promising pupil.

They did not seem to know that Darwin was dead but no matter. It was very helpful for me on my journey which after endless conversation came to an end—I never knew where—but I was snatched up by unknown drivers and placed in a sledge, my baggage thrown on my knees and away we drove into the icy night. Russia had taught me indifference to time and space. I closed my eyes under my frozen eyelashes and hoped that my general insensibility was not the first symptom of frost-bite. . . .

I found myself outside a white-porched country house with lights shining upon the snow. The door opened and a doctor emerged clad in a blouse. It must have been Dushan. He addressed me in French and I was brought shivering into the warm air. Various quiet people came out and inspected me and passed within. The doctor took me to a schoolroom and left my baggage on a rough bed: but I felt more elated than if I had entered the Imperial Palace. He informed me that Tolstoy invited me to join him and his family at supper. I removed my collar and tie in deference to the dress of the household. I regretted I had not brought a peasant's smock from England.

Into a wide white-washed room I stepped and Tolstoy himself motioned me to a place. He sat there incredibly crumpled, like a bearded gnome. Only his flashing black eyes signalled greatness. Before I could take my seat, he had addressed me a question or two. Naïve and simple, it was embarrassing. Did I believe in God? Was I vegetarian? I could only bow to each question as in a dream. To the second query the Countess answered for me. Casting her eyes on my figure, stalwart from three years' rowing at Cambridge, she muttered that I could not possibly be a vegetarian. All this in French, which was certainly the proper language for the next query. With a piercing glance he asked my relations to women! Under the Tolstoyan Catechism no one seemed disconcerted except myself. But there is no modesty in the East and a traveller into Russia realises that he has crossed the great Divide. False modesty I found none in Tolstoy's conversation any more than in the Bible, which is as Eastern as the Arabian Nights. At any rate it was more

satisfactory to sup like Nebuchadnezzar than feast with Balshazzar. Family pictures hung on the walls, including Prince Volkynski, a hero of *War and Peace*.

I did not realise that I was the last of a long line of pilgrims, madmen, disciples and cranks who had found their way to Ysnaya Polyana. I seemed to have passed the scrutiny. I received nothing but kindness and hospitality. The Countess set herself to be pleasant and took me aside to chat. She had recently appealed to the Governor of Tula for armed assistance to protect their cabbages from the starving peasants. This step had caused the old man great anguish as she explained to me. So this was the formidable Sonya Androvnova who had borne his children and with those hands had copied the MSS. of *War and Peace* seven times! A book which requires an effort of the will to read even once. She was sunken and humbled, I thought, as though she recognised that he was the Master in every way. Her energies seemed softened and the peasant's clothing, which she told me she detested, obliterated personality in a woman. It was the reverse with Tolstoy, who was made, like John the Baptist, distinguished thereby. She spoke of her own noble behaviour and a little sadly of the lack of carpets on the clean wooden floor and of her luxurious home in Moscow. But I had come into the wilderness to admire the clothing of the prophets and to share their food. I felt uncomfortable in my travelling (Hope Bros.) suit. It seemed out of place and I had a feeling that for the only time in my life ladies were admiring my clothes. All the women wore the same coarse, ill-cut garments and once more the Countess explained how they had given in after a long struggle and were now satisfied to dress as he wished them. "*Tu vicisti, O Galilae.*"

All was immensely peaceful during my stay and I was never left alone but carried off into conversation by the doctor, who begged me write down Tolstoy's every word, or the Countess, or most wonderfully by the great man himself. The atmosphere was one of all pride and passion spent, but I continued to be a matter of mild interest. The Countess had obviously accepted what Destiny had provided for her. The immense interest of the whole world was worth living for: but to have

lived with a demoniac must have been an unnerving experience. The impartial visitor passed from pity to admiration.

The old man was in fine fettle during my visit. He lived up to everything I had read or imagined about him. I could only admire the mighty health which sent him out to work on the farm of a dark winter morning. When I descended in the morning to breakfast, he was coming in from the snowy scenes, his tangled beard wet with the elements, his high boots covered with snow and his long sinewy arms the arms of a ploughman rather than of a scrivener.

After he had written awhile in his study, I was admitted to be shown manuscripts and pictures, all explained in the rasping voice of a preacher. He exhibited a picture of a vested priest blessing a new Vodka and spirit store. "That is what is wrong with Russia." And I resolved to join the anti-Saloon League.

He spoke generally of the persecuted: of the Poles, the Jews and of his Doukhobors whom he had enabled to emigrate carrying their Pacifism to Canada for other Governments to deal with. Occasionally he uttered a quiet denunciation of Patriotism—"the sin condemned in the Gospels". Of wars and soldiery he was even angrier in condemnation. And his final sentence was the most memorable. One day, perhaps soon, Europe would have to choose between him and the Bayonets!

I often pondered these words of the Prophet, for the choice of the Bayonets has been imposed twice since that date upon a broken Continent.

A prophet he was, though he detested many of the evils which followed in his train. To many his excommunication by the Holy Synod was the first tocsin of the Revolution. He replied with an appeal to the Czar offering minimum and not unpractical terms. The Revolution might have been averted by a simple and popular Bill of Rights. The country had begun to seethe and as Tolstoy put it: "A man standing on tiptoes cannot stand there long". He desperately endeavoured a compromise, which reached the Czar through the hands of a Grand Duke, but only brought the feeble reassurance that Tolstoy need not worry as the Czar would not show it to anyone!

On the other hand he pleaded with the Revolutionaries to withhold their bombs. He hated their excesses and as for the planners he said: "Economic ideals are not ideals at all". He called for self-perfection not class-hatred and passive resistance instead of active bombs. His influence was so great in Russia that the early Revolution was slowed down largely by his teaching. He incurred the hatred of the real Anarchists and lost an immense following. Lenin and his followers had come to the conclusion that Tolstoy's trumpetings were insufficient to topple the walls of the Kremlin.

But when he laid down that man's life belongs not to the State but to Him who gave it, he had laid the seeds of eventual destruction for both the Czardom and the Soviet.

My last glimpse of Tolstoy came when he sped me from his own portals. The Countess, touched by my hero-worship, thrust a photograph into my hand which she had taken of the old man standing in the snow. And over the film he had written my name and his. The date was halfway between the Wars of Napoleon III and the greater War which was fondly believed to have closed the reign of the bayonets for ever. Perhaps so, but the place of the bayonets was taken by something far more terrible. It was time for the old Peacemaker, the anti-Martian, to die.

He found his life poisoned by contradictions. He had denounced property as the source of all evils and in old age he found himself struggling over copyrights and testaments. No wonder he was subjected to caricature and ridicule. Yet meekly he answered the critics. He met accusations of hypocrisy with the greatest humility. But his heart gnawed his fetters and he was always planning some last defiant gesture, some act better than suicide which was only a defiance of God. He was determined to make all his writings public property in spite of Sonya and Sonya herself was to be abandoned at the last. . . . He planned to escape from his home like a schoolboy fleeing from school. But it was not his wife—it was from himself he determined to fly. He had found the Truth and freed his soul, but his body lay in the fell clutch of circumstance and he awaited his last days in which to cast that aside for ever.

SALUTATION TO FIVE

Two years after my visit he rose from his prophetic fears and in agony that he had failed in his mission, that he had neither delivered man from Patriotism, Prostitution and Poverty, nor found the God with whom he believed he shared so many traits, he struggled out into the snow—took flight from his family for ever—and died in one of those little Russian railway stations which mark no particular place and from which a few dim tracks lead nowhere. The human family stays struggling in the darkness without much more hope than expressed in his last prayer: "From Thee have I come and to Thee I shall return. Thy Will be done."

SIR MARK SYKES

Mark Sykes: His Life and Letters, by Shane Leslie, with an Introduction by Winston Churchill.
Trial and Error, by Chaim Weizmann, First President of Israel.
Palestine the Reality, by J. M. N. Jeffries.
The Seven Pillars of Wisdom, by Lawrence of Arabia.

MARK SYKES is only remembered by those who knew him and once cherished his bright promise. Otherwise he is quite forgotten in speech and print save for occasional reference in books about the Middle East and in sighs occasioned by Zionism.

Yet Mark Sykes was a favourite in the race for fame in good King Edward's days—days when Queen Victoria and Mr. Gladstone had been lately laid to rest to the murmur of an Empire's lamentation: days when three young men successively snatched the banner of "Young England", that Disraeli devised in *Coningsby*. Whoever remembers Curzon, Churchill and Sykes young will attest these words. But the dead cannot remember and few contemporaries remain.

All three were determined to ride their ambitions far and all three made the House of Commons their first lap. All three prepared themselves with adventurous travel and sharpened their pens in the manner of Borrow or Kinglake. Borrowian in familiarity with the scenes they condescended to view, they wrote in the vintage of *Eothen*. There was not one of the three who did not carry the key to 10 Downing Street in his travelling suitcase.

Far different their fates. Curzon reached all but the top rung. Mark fell from the second or third. It was for Winston to write of him to the present compiler: "The Great War

was made tragic by the loss of many young men whose feet had hardly touched the first rung of their careers . . . some had as young men reached the distinction of the House of Commons. Prominent amongst them was one who refused ministerial office during the War, and who if he had lived would in all probability have reached the Cabinet. Of the young men who made their way to the fore after service in the Boer War, none set out with a more determined and original programme than Mark Sykes."

It was on St. Patrick's Eve 1879 that Jessica Sykes (half a Leslie and half a Cavendish-Bentinck) bore a son to Sir Tatton Sykes. The combinations in her blood should have really doubled dullness but the ways of heredity are strange. An unexpectedly talented mother, Jessica gave Mark all her gifts and none of her follies. A rather embarrassing gift was that of the Apostolic Faith which is not helpful in English politics. Sir Tatton gave him one of the great names of Yorkshire. Tatton's father had been the "Great Commoner" of the Ridings. The name of Sykes, two hobbies and big wealth were Sir Tatton's contributions at the cradle. Mark had no interest in the hobbies, which pertained to breeding racehorses and designing Gothic churches. The old man could be described as Pugin at Tattersall's.

Mark gloried in the democratic descent of the Sykes from a mayor of Hull who invested what he made from hemp and tallow in planting the wolds. He confessed: "I cannot feel superbly feudal."

Mark had looked into Yorkshire forebears and come to some prehistoric conclusions: "I am not an Anglo-Saxon, but a Woldsmen, consequently a pirate: we came from the North sea. We massacred and destroyed all the wretched flint-making people and drove them off the Wolds and now they live between York and Selby. . . . We are not money-makers but seizers and snatchers."

It did not sound like Mark's character. The only previous Sir Mark Sykes was remarkable as the first clergyman to be created a Baronet. The second Sir Mark proved to be the first Baronet to take a hand in the fulfilment of Scripture prophecy: the return of the Jews to Palestine.

For so delicate a task in the future it was only right that his education should be out of the ordinary. He spent little time at Sledmere which he described as "an English Gentleman's house in the Eighteenth Century". That was never Mark's ideal.

Nevertheless Sledmere must have been a delicious home for an only son, who had the run of the Estate, the command of retainers and the prospect of incessant adventure. Before Mark was fifteen he had visited Assouan on the Dervish frontier, for Sir Tatton had some of the characteristics of the Wandering Jew, certainly in travelling and perhaps in the accumulation of garments on his person. These he was liable to discard at the least change in temperature. A footman followed to retrieve overcoats shed in the grounds. Mark used to describe his embarrassment in York Station when his father stopped to remove a superfluous pair of trousers on receiving a warning from the barometer.

Their travel was widespread. Mark reached India, under the rule of the last of the Whig noblemen, Lord Lansdowne, found himself barefooted amongst the Arabs of the Desert and as though by Magic Carpet was transported to Mexico to observe the zenith of Porfirio Diaz: a not inhuman forerunner of European dictatorship. Sir Tatton in his time had touched corners of the globe unknown even to Cook. Of the Druses of Lebanon Mark recorded: "When I was a little boy of ten I was taken by my father to their mountain, again when I was eleven, again when I was thirteen, and lastly, five years later, I visited them alone."

In mid-nineties there was a pause at Sledmere. A companion was found for the lonely and diminutive traveller in young Howard de Walden, an Etonian, who found Mark "a large round, amiable boy" but liable to mention the Fourth Dimension which is bad form amongst schoolboys. Their play did not include cricket but they attempted to fight "a genuine bull", and Mark arranged for the new Gothic church to be used as a storming exercise with ladders. He had discovered the works of Vauban in the library and the smooth lawn was laid out in bastions, lunettes and redans, all that would have been approved by *Uncle Toby*. By a curious

coincidence Lawrence Sterne had once applied for a chaplaincy at Sledmere. His ghost at least would have delighted in the scene.

"One might do anything at Sledmere but frighten the mares. Now and again Mark's antics would evoke a wild old spectre flapping from the house and a sort of high nasal litany would come down the wind: 'You mustn't frighten the mares! You mustn't frighten the mares!'" So remembered Howard de Walden.

Mark's education needed attention, especially in classical languages. In 1888 he had been dropped on Lord Grenfell the Sirdar, who had found him the most intelligent boy he had ever met and taught him the rudiments of ancient Egyptian: but this was deemed insufficient for a future Squire. He had no knowledge of the Bible but he knew Sir Richard Burton's *Arabian Nights*, notes and all, very well. He might have been born an old rake for all their effect upon him. At the *Institut St. Louis* in Brussels or at Beaumont he regarded his school-fellows as children. Between the Druses of Lebanon and the English Jesuits, between the Bookies of Newmarket and the Croupiers at Monte Carlo, Mark absorbed the values of the modern world with bright and unbored eyes. His mother raced and gambled, but she imposed a close appreciation of Swift and Dickens upon her son.

By 1890 he was entrusted to the Jesuits at Beaumont who had the great common sense to let him follow his bent. Provided he accepted their religious teaching and was loyal to Loyola, he was allowed to invent games, tell Oriental stories and act plays. At one time he was interested enough in piracy to join a Navy Class. He accustomed a stock of stagbeetles to become drunk on school beer. He collected the loafers into gangs for Red Indian purposes. He showed himself inimitable in school acting and was given a prize for elocution. Even Jesuit missionaries could learn something from his set-piece on a Turkish General talking French. To prevent him acquiring an excess of useless knowledge his mother constantly swept him away on far journeys from which he returned with a collection of travellers' tales and lethal weapons.

The winter of 1894 he spent at Sledmere studying Marshal Saxe on fortification. Later he wrote a short life of his hero and became an authority on the Battle of Fontenoy. On his sixteenth birthday he left England for Monte Carlo, taking with him three fox-terriers and one tutor. He decided that the foreign school-system overworked the pupils and preferred the company of the Croupiers. His mother dragged him to race-courses and Casinos until he was utterly bored by both. He was found behind the Jockey Club at Newmarket deep in Swift.

From Monaco he passed to Brussels for a year's schooling, but chiefly as a means of visiting the chief towns of Belgium. From foreign Schools he learnt to put a cosmopolitan edge on his future demeanour with men. Tradition he declared was the true object of education and without that spirit he saw English public schools beating the waves as vainly as the Persian King.

Sir Tatton would have preferred to make a Harrovian of him, but in this and everything was overruled by Jessica. He managed to whisk Mark to famous criminal trials instead of the pantomime. Likewise he would have chosen Gothic Oxford but Cambridge was preferred for being nearer to Newmarket. Mark was sent to Jesus College perhaps because Arthur Gray, a strenuous Yorkshireman, was tolerant of an itinerant Catholic boy who had no intention of passing even the "Little Go". Easter 1897 found him matriculating and taking rooms in Jesus Lane for himself and suite which included a tutor, a companion and a *maître de chambre*. For a person of his experience he found the University rather narrowing, but for the first time he met men more brilliant though not so variable as himself.

At King's he met Dr. Montagu James, later Provost, whose knowledge of mediaeval detail was as uncanny as his stories about ghosts. But he was also as quick a mimic as Mark and though his programme was limited to the Dons of his College he entertained Mark immensely. Mark frequented the rooms of learning and never failed to impersonate a Yorkshireman, a Dragoman or a Turkish official. It was still a very pleasant world, although a War about something was stirring somewhere in South Africa.

Mark devoted himself when in Cambridge to raising the dramatic standards of the A.D.C. and editing a freelance paper called the *Snarl*. But Cambridge terms were only interludes between his constant explorations in the East. That the Orient was the more important side of his life could be realised by visitors who found him in Arab dress smoking a Hookah, reciting scenes from his journeys or correcting proofs of books he was about to launch on the world. On one occasion this astonishing undergraduate was found entertaining the Sultan's brother-in-law.

Cambridge fortunately did not prove utterly deficient in knowledge of the East. Professor E. G. Browne combined a Fellowship at Pembroke with Persian patriotism. Mark, being Imperial, was drawn with difficulty towards the lesser races but in the end his views had softened if not changed. Comparing Mark with another gentleman adventurer, Wilfrid Blunt, Browne remarked that Blunt saw the romance and chivalry of the East, while Sykes had an eye for the comic and burlesque. At the same time his intuition gave him that flash of understanding which fails the more exact student. Browne gave him credit for the greatest capacity for not learning that he had ever met!

The fruits of his travels were appreciated. In the Hauran he discovered an unrecorded inscription. Dr. James found the Greek transcriptions in his notebook "astonishingly faithful and intelligent". The Royal Geographical found his discovery of the "Hill of Bones" of great importance. He had reported his find freely but in vain: "Presently a German will mention them in a text book as his own discovery and British science will translate the text book and the world will be informed of the discovery". It was like the story of the discovery of Neptune by Adams of St. John, for which the credit went to France after a similar exhibition of sloth.

The Diaries of his trips became a book called *Through Five Turkish Provinces*. It was a young man's book, underlining the comic, but astonishing his Cambridge tutors. The Press were surprised that an undergraduate could obtain leave to visit Baghdad and Mosul, and his references to Armenians appeared cold-blooded. He illustrated Oriental perversity by

supposing the gift of a coat: "he will cut off the sleeves for gaiters and then use the body as an umbrella". His Dragoman seemed prophetic of later days when he spoke of "roast *whale* and potted *hyena*", meaning veal and ham! He described the splendid Bridge at Mosul whose position reminded him exactly "of the Turkish wag, who said: I built the bridge and if the river doesn't choose to run under it, that is not my fault". Mount Ararat he saw at sunrise when the enormous bulk practically eclipses the sun before its emergence over the peak. A sight never before or since described.

At this point his education had come to an end, for on his return he was called to active service in South Africa where a War as menacing as Ararat had been darkening the Sun of Empire.

Mark subjected his views on the rights and wrongs of Briton and Boer to his soldierly duty. Cambridge Thought had been the nurse of Imperialism. A contemporary, Forbes Robinson, had been taken by a fellow Christ's man (called Smuts) to visit President Kruger, who had told him that 21,000 of the rebellious Outlanders had died three years before they signed the Petition for Franchise! To which Smuts made the comment that the Transvaal might become "a second Ireland 5,000 miles from home". Incidents like these fortified pro-Boer feeling in England. Mark delved into history: "Never has there been a war when the peace party was composed of such wretched specimens. Every war in which we have been engaged has been vigorously opposed by a few. Compare the opposition to the Napoleonic Wars and the supporters. Pitt for it, Fox against. The Crimea, Lord Palmerston for it, Cobden and Bright against. Compare, I ask you, Chamberlain with Pitt . . . and if you can without smiling, compare Fox with Stead and Labby!"

The War proved a puzzle for the Aldershot-patterned Army, although the Boers were disappointed of the redcoats which made such good marks in previous wars. Mark's Eastern travels had fittened him and though he had come of age to one of the richest successions in Yorkshire, he wrote cheerfully home with a touch of savage humour and a spate

of caricatures which kept the Army laughing. Incidentally, though not under the name, he created "Colonel Blimp" and illustrated a comic Drill Book for him. With his memory of Vauban and Saxe he set out to build the type of field fortifications in which the British Army later spent a European War. For the time they proved excellent against Boers who had lost their artillery. His work procured his name in Despatches, though there was no mention of the famous stimulant he invented for native workers—the three W's—Water, Whisky and Worcestershire sauce! "They are really rather nice people (I like them better than Englishmen) but hush! What dreadful blasphemy have I whispered!" An Alice in Wonderland war it was. "The local Boer leader is a charming Frenchman, who gives cigarettes to all the prisoners he takes, as well as a very good luncheon, after which he sends them in stark naked!"

Wonderland passed to Blunderland, and Mark's letters, serious enough, never omitted a timely scream. He found himself in action at last with artillery support: "Now comes the comic portion of the story. You see the gunners were shooting at the wrong place and hit it, while we shot at the wrong place and hit the right one and the joke is I only fired to amuse the men and thought nothing was there."

As for the Blockhouses by which Kitchener finished the War: "Some were built by common civilians, others by the Royal Engineers. The common civilians built ordinary Blockhouses as they were ordered. True, they turn bullets, are good to shoot through and afford a pleasant shelter, but who could not do that?"

The three Blockhouses built by the Engineers he treated to Swiftean shafts. The first took double time to build (attributable to double brains) but collapsed in a thunderstorm just as it was completed. The second was built on a river bank twice as solidly but unfortunately "sailed gaily into the river" bank and all. The third fell before finished.

He passed his time with endless reading but amid his service he could claim: "I have lampooned the General, exposed the Royal Engineers, and arrested civilians. I also fed twenty-four Boer babies and their twelve Mamas for two days."

The job he most enjoyed was training Basutos: "I make them sing their war-songs and the final charge in the attack is very impressive."

As for the Engineers, they built a watch-tower without a roof which Mark crowned with an old Kaffir cooking-pot upside down, "quite bullet proof and shields the observer from the foe". Incidentally he had applied the system which was to underlie the future tin-hat of the Army. But what was this to the boyish mind which later camouflaged a piece of cannon in Sledmere Park.

He was fond of recording incidents which never appeared in the official history. From Rhenoster Bridge (December 30, 1900) he reported an action allowing him to "wear the medal without shame".

"... I joined the column just as the moon went down. Our movements were shrouded in the deepest mystery. Slowly through the dust and gloom the conquering column wended its way, onward, ever onward. After about one hour's march we came to a sudden halt. We had lost our way! Did this daunt us? Never. We threw out outposts and prepared to await until dawn. Suddenly a voice in the darkness hailed: 'Halt, who comes there?' And who do you think it was? Why, the sentry on the camp we had started from!"

Mark's love and laudation was poured upon the hard-used and ill-paid Militia. With grinning sarcasm he suggested they should be used "in building farms for the returned Boer prisoners or, if there is a dearth of Kaffir labour, to dig the mines for the Jews at Johannesburg!"

He had no illusion as to whom the War would profit. "I am glad to say the Outlanders must now serve as soldiers if they wish to get back to their beloved mines."

After two years living under canvas he returned home in an open carriage with postilions surrounded by mounted tenantry. A feudal fête followed worthy of a novel of Disraeli. But Time's chariot wheels seemed ever pressing behind him. He decided to marry and speedily return to the East. Proposals to bring him into Parliament he scattered with insult. "I have told them that I am neither a buffoon,

an office seeker nor a hypocrite, that I cannot talk sonorous twaddle for endless hours." So it was for the minarets of the East, not Westminster, that he thrust again.

One problem required adjudication. His parents had been involved in scandals and lawsuits. He had made peace between them and decided that the solution was to send his father to visit New Zealand with a chef. It was almost the only place in the world unknown to Sir Tatton. His mother was more difficult. Brilliant and wanton and in prudence very wanting, she figured in several scenes on racecourses. They are not written in the annals of Mayfair. Once King Edward VII had to be rescued from her at the Jockey Club enclosure in Newmarket. Not that she proffered him embraces but that her mood led her to poke the royal ribs. On another occasion her Puritan sister, Mrs. Arthur James, actually drove over her at Ascot rather than allow her to join her smart party. Mark was always magnanimous to the woman who taught him the Faith, Swift and Dickens. The manner of her end was grim or, as he said, "it was like the last phase of Napoleon."

Into this divided household Mark introduced his beloved Edith Gorst and married her. Her visit to Sledmere was cut short by the family solicitor who called to remind her she had promised Sir Tatton that her visit would be a short one! The poor old gentleman had no particular reason to approve of brides on the premises.

The Yorkshire papers announced that Mark's honeymoon would be spent in Jerusalem. However, he had time to take his bride to Ireland and associate himself with George Wyndham, a figure of chivalry as Chief Secretary quartered in the Phoenix Park. Although he found traces of the feuds, fatalism and fun of the Orient in Ireland, Mark decided his real bent was the Middle East. Besides, his masterpiece was to cover the whole Ottoman Empire. Within twenty-four hours he wrote: "Give me a native regiment to organise, a rebellion to raise, a map to make, a blockhouse line to construct and I will do it: anything but this life of a cat. . . ."

Before long he was surveying earthquakes in the Balkans, delighting in Sir Nicolas O'Connor in Constantinople, while

his wife produced a genuine heir at Therapia. Constantinople he described as though in parody of Second Corinthians as "indestructible, all-corrupting, yet seemingly incorruptible". The following year appeared *Dar-ul-Islam*, the fruits of his swift prenuptial dash of 1,600 miles into some unknown country which he succeeded in mapping. Rudyard Kipling wrote after reading it at a sitting for his sole knowledge of Turkey: "I can smell the smell (much like ours in India I take it) of the towns. What you said about the cold in *warm* climates went to my bones. Nothing is colder than the East when she chooses. I am very glad you like the Turk. . . . You ought to have been born in the East." H. G. Wells decided the book would "be a great lark to read". The pithiest review came from the *Spectator* to the effect that: "Travel books are of three kinds. There are the learned books and the ignorant books and the books written by Captain Mark Sykes!"

For a time he became attached to Sir Nicolas O'Connor in the leisurely way he had served George Wyndham. Apparently Irishmen could understand the Turk and during O'Connor's embassy "there was never a day when British policy was in doubt nor yet ever one when its representative was disliked". For lack of such a working tandem as O'Connor and Sykes, Turkey was allowed later to slip into war against England.

Meantime with escort and mules and wife Mark scoured Turkey-in-Asia which, to the English mind, was only the field of St. Paul's egotistical journeys. Mark's recipe was practical: "Wipe Omar Khayyam, Bernard Shaw out of your mind, learn the Book of Job by heart for philosophy, the Book of Judges, the Arabian Nights (Burton's translation) for ethics. Ride by balance, not by grip, keep your girths loose, look out for rat-holes, be polite and dignified in your conversation." His final summary was: "When I see this country and see our long lost opportunities it makes me mad. I dare say we are meant to be masters of Turkey and that is why we are carrying on like this. The ways of God are inscrutable. I cannot help seeing the finger of destiny in all this and yet we are a declining nation."

To him the signs of the times were dimly but prophetically

apparent. He felt it was his duty to scout and scour the Middle East, make himself amusing to all men, tolerant to all Creeds and prepare for any work England might one day throw to him. It was nearer than he dreamed.

Mark had found himself in the odd position of a Yorkshire squire attached to the Roman Communion. He realised it tended more to prevent a political career than even the public scufflings of his ill-assorted parents. It made him very devout and strangely for a pupil of the Jesuits he had a sense of mysticism. Stranger still to the outsider, he was immensely tolerant. His travels threw him outside the swaddling clothes of English Catholicism or of the political dislike of the Irish inculcated by Conservatives. He found Irelands elsewhere than in the East Atlantic. As for difference in rite he recalled some funny sideshows. Once he attended Coptic Mass in the desert when prayers were included for the Royal Family and Sir Mark Sykes and brood. On an odder occasion he found the Nestorian Church had consecrated a Boy Bishop and why? Because the late Primate's family had become Chaldaean Catholics! He must have been the only Englishman to discover that Jacobite Christians were really Kurds. He learnt, as the late Lord Lovat learnt in Abyssinia, that the sacrifices of Abraham may continue under the New Law. But these are matters which are probably hidden from Canterbury as well as from Roman Congregations.

When old Sir Tatton died as Mark believed in the spirit of the Church Invisible, he entered at night with one companion into the beautiful Anglican Church his father had built and recited the Office of the Dead, the Requiem Mass (without the Consecrations) and finally the Absolutions. Stranger things have occurred in the Church of England: and who would say him Nay?

In humorous mood Mark sketched an Anglican Church Pageant in the course of which a final Tableau showed the Bishop of London taking the Cardinal of Westminster and General Booth to a benefit performance at the Empire Theatre. It should be added that by that time the Empire Parade of courtesans was no longer tolerated, and the imagination of the pious was not embarrassed by Mark's sketch.

He was like every true traveller, impressed by the Moslem achievements. The Prophet was "in earnest, mad if you will, but a scheming, crafty, vainglorious impostor never!" He considered the acceptance of polygamy "an unparalleled disaster for the world" even as an antiseptic to the Oriental vice. He realised the position held by Sodomy in the East and naïvely suggested introducing the British Public School into India at least as the best manner of cure. Though he disbelieved in European grafts on the East, he wished the same "good wholesome school" upon the Turks, for whom he always extended qualified admiration and hopes.

Turks and Moslems! They caused him worry and watchfulness for the rest of his life. What curious prescience sent him on his uncomfortable journeys far from country-house luxury and political ambitions at home? At one time he reported he had "been living on the ground without a tent for the last fifteen days and eating the veriest garbage". Was it to provide the War Office with sketches and plans of unmapped territory? No man rode or worked or wrote in such a desperate hurry.

He collected lists of Tribes unknown to the Royal Geographical Society. He learnt there were not 700 real Turks in male descent at Constantinople. "Damn those Turks: they are perfectly appalling and yet so important. I am coming to the belief that the Turk as such is a myth." But the myth was soon realised in war and appallingly for England. It was Russia whom he termed a disease, and when Edward Grey agreed to partition Persia by Treaty with the Czar, Mark wrote furiously: "Another slice of the human race is to be sludged under the worst government in the world, no matter what happens in the future. . . . We English are to have free play in the inaccessible mountains of the Hindu Kush, the grilling and pestiferous shores of the Persian Gulf."

Mark stormed through what he called "the Caliph's Last Heritage". He studied intensively the old Turkey and the new Turk. The corruption and futility roused his wildest humour. He found "an expensive modern road whose first section was in ruins before the last was finished". Surely it was better to live amongst the Arabian Nights and learn

about great kings and travellers. He railed and roared with delight at the inefficacy of Turkish ships, on which "all natural laws are permanently suspended". A Turkish steamer can proceed with engines which no ship chandler could accept as scrap iron. On Turkish steamers there is no reason why the chart should not be used as a table cloth for the captain's dinner.

In fact he thoroughly enjoyed himself dancing the Puck betwixt East and West. Lord Curzon in his youthful travels had allowed bowing Orientals to believe he might possibly become a consort of Queen Victoria. Mark found himself mistaken for "the King of England's daughter in disguise!" — as good a travelling dress as any.

If they thought he was a spy he did not care. He made no secret of his maps and sketches, using Turkish soldiers to mark base-lines and tipping the police handsomely so that they could report they were keeping him under careful observation. He could deal with any Easterner except the misfits who had been educated by American missionaries.

To complete his view of the Moslem he returned by Egypt, Tunisia, Algeria and Spain which he crossed by mules provided by his friend and schoolmate of Beaumont days, the Duke of Alba. Railways he was able to avoid entirely. His comment on Egypt had already been made: "By God's will this wonderful Egypt, half vision and half nightmare, is the work of Cromer who knew not Gordon nor yet native opinion".

Comparing French and British methods: "The English Empire has been formed to amuse and employ an aristocracy, the French Empire to profit a democratic bureaucracy". He had little use for France or Italy in their African projects. "We only rule by favour of Moslems because we play the game nine times out of ten."

By this time Mark was a first-hand and comparatively first-class authority on the East. The time had come for him to deliver words of wisdom and warning in the House of Commons.

He had long declared for Tory Democracy and accordingly stood for the home Division of Buckrose at the Elections of 1909 and 1910. Each time he was defeated by two hundred

votes in a constituency which his uncle Christopher had once lost by one. The difference probably represented the unforgiving Protestants. He was variously assailed as "Nabob, Papist and *Enfant Terrible*".

Mark saw further ahead than the Liberal-Tory scuffles of that day. The question he set himself could be repeated today: "Will the great fluctuating majority be captured by the Socialists, anti-nationalists, humanitarians, atheists or can England be saved from herself?" At any rate he set out to place her on the ways of salvation. Life was hastening but Luck suddenly hastened to keep step. The sitting member for Hull was unseated on petition and Mark was given his place.

Before the end of 1911 he made his maiden. It counted with F. E. Smith's as one of the memorable successes in that manner of speech. After John Dillon had wearied the House, Mark rose to comment on Anglo-German relations as adduced by Edward Grey. Mark spun the rosary of peril from Tunis to Travancore. Roars of laughter rippled round his anecdotes, but otherwise Aubrey Herbert recorded it was heard "in the rare complete silence that the House sometimes gives to a distinguished contribution to its debates". The result had certainly never happened before. The Liberal Prime Minister rose to congratulate the Tory recruit, a pleasant gesture of which Asquith of Balliol was capable. Mark airily disposed of his success as a fluke. But flukes are unprepared. By arid desert and betwixt Sinai and Scinde he had worked for this hour. The Tories were flattered by his arrival but Mark himself was flabbergasted by a Party he found "somnolent and stupid". He met one Tory who was neither, who assured him he was the eventual leader, adding "you must never look ahead". This was F. E. Smith, but Mark commented: "This is desperate for this fellow has no belief, no principle".

The maiden speech delighted Yorkshire as though a colt had scored a century in his first match against the Australians. It was said that there was only one Tory in the Buckrose Division who had not lost his head with delight over Mark's maiden; and that was Mark himself.

The dominant characters, Lloyd George and Winston, were Liberal and Buchan (Lord Tweedsmuir) noted that "the Opposition confined itself to opposing though a few younger men, like Mark Sykes and Aubrey Herbert, stood for something more than a negation". But Mark was not born to be a negative or reside in *camera obscura*.

His few short years ahead were swayed upon the eddies of the Irish trouble. It was realised that a Tory Democrat might be the right man to snatch the wheel from the Unionists, who were without a chart, and the Liberals, who were without pilot. "It is a question", he said, "of two ships in a fog trying to avoid a collision." Mark began by crossing swords with Redmond and ended by debating against Carson.

As a Unionist he declared that Pitt's Union had failed. "The essential to a settlement is that there shall be no victory." The year of Fate, 1914, was under way before Mark made his great appeal outside Party. Turning to the excited opponents he blamed both: "We have drifted on passions until we have divided class from class, creed from creed, in order to further our policies until the military forces and the very Throne have been involved in our quarrels". Then he advanced his solution. He appealed entreatingly for a Federalism with the *temporary* exclusion of Ulster. It meant peace for England and unity in Ireland. After 35 years of "solutioning", Ireland today would be in a happier, at least more *elastic*, state than the present dual deadlock, unless of course such deadlock is desirable to all time.

Mark naturally fell under Tory suspicions, while Carson's Ulstermen decided that a Papist in the Unionist camp could be as dangerous as "a nigger in the pile". Labour in Hull were hailing a future leader. The Irish began to dream that if Liberals failed them, Tory Democracy evolved from George Wyndham to Mark Sykes, might one day fill the Bill.

No sooner had arms been landed by both combatants in Ireland and the field set for Civil War between the Volunteers of the North and the South than a Kaiser, afraid of his own bellicosity, let slip the Hounds of War which the statesmen of the world have been struggling to confine to Hell's Kennels ever since.

The Irish trouble was postponed, but when it came up for settlement, neither Redmond nor Sykes was there. Both were destined to die overwhelmed by their own endeavours. It is interesting that the Irish in Yorkshire, although his political opponents in Hull, had come to watch him with such hope and belief that they attributed his early death to foul means. It was a mighty relief to Belfast Orangemen and to Ulster Unionists that he died when he died. He might so easily have turned their flank.

War now has a familiar ring but in 1914 it rang like a Firebell at a children's tea party. Mark was one of the few Englishmen who was absolutely ready and he left the House to take up immediate tasks until the hour of his death.

At home he had struggled to make Territorials a success. As far back as 1910 he had called for Kitchener to organise Haldane's "Paper Dragon". Meantime he raised Yeomanry amongst his farmers, turned the wagoners of the Wold into military drivers, conducted forced marches from Sledmere to Richmond, from Doncaster to Scarborough, defended Burdale Tunnel from a midnight attack whereat people only smiled. "Our Mark playing Boy Scout" or "Now the War Office will feel what an *enfant terrible* is!"

Even his dramatic Play of warning had been censored for fear of giving offence to a European Power.

But Mark was terribly serious. He told the House that the danger of invasion "is like the doctrine of eternal punishment. Some believe in it and some do not, but prudent people take precautions." The British are not prudent, only somnolent, but in any case a year after this speech they woke up and declared War for themselves.

On the Eastern field he was sorely needed. During ten years he had supplied maps and reconnaissance of Asia Minor to the War Office. By curious foresight he had mapped N.W. Mesopotamia and South of Jerusalem, parts which the authorities had left to the unborn combatants of Armageddon to put into map cases. He spoke prophetically of a German frontier, and then a Russian frontier descending upon the East. He had not envisaged the day when England would have skedaddled.

Kitchener quickly placed Mark on the general staff for service in the East where he had mapped 5,000 miles of military roads in his day. Thither and hither he was plunged for the next four years. He suggested the Arab Revolt even before Turkey had made the mistake Italy made in a later war by joining the eventual losers when dressed up as cock-crowing conquerors. Mark saw clearly that the end of the Ottoman Empire at the hands of the Young Turks meant that War could not be averted. He wished Bulgaria to be bribed either with their lost provinces or with payment of their debts. It would have saved British lives and prestige if his advice had been taken, but the Bulgars were cheerfully added to the Kaiser's forces.

Mark's war achievements in the East came under two heads:

First the Sykes-Picot Treaty dividing the aims of France and the aims of England.

Secondly, his briefing of Balfour for the Zionist Declaration.

After interviewing Bulgarians, the Khedive, Armenians, he catalogued and caricatured Moslems of every degree with soft intemperate art in the effort to make home officials understand. The real difficulty in the Middle East was the obstinate claim of the French upon Syria, dating from the Crusades. It was not unlike the hold of England upon Ireland in the past. When Mark returned to England at the end of 1915 he was instructed to make an arrangement with the French. He was expected to prove equally pro-Arab and pro-French and to promise Arabs their freedom while satisfying French pride of possession. It was like promising Irish Freedom while bidding Orange Ulster draw the lines of partition. In the East the line of partition was called the Sykes-Picot Treaty: and was the result of the cabined and confined conditions imposed on Mark by his own Government. To be loyal to them and the Arab and the French ally passed the wit of man, but he tried. One Lawrence (later surnamed "of Arabia") also tried his hand at drawing the Arab from the Turk and crossed Mark's path. In years to come the author of the *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* described Mark as "a bundle of prejudices, intuitions, half-sciences. His ideas were of the outside; and he lacked patience to test his material before

choosing his style of building. . . . Laughs were his triumphs. His instincts lay in parody; by choice he was a caricaturist rather than an artist; even in statesmanship. He saw the odd in everything and missed the even. He would sketch out in a few dashes a new world, all out of scale, but vivid as a vision of some sides of the thing we hoped. His help did us good and harm."

So Lawrence was also a caricaturist. The pity is that we have not Mark's counter-sketch.

Mark's War wanderings were greater even than in days of peaceful exploration. Five times he crossed the Mediterranean, twice the North Sea. Late in 1915 he went to India as Kitchener's envoy to discuss Mesopotamia with the Viceroy. He would have accompanied Kitchener on his last and fatal trip to Russia, had it not been cancelled in the previous week. Already he had found his way to the Czar at Petersburg and the Grand Duke, Commander in Chief in the Caucasus, to bring them the results of his secret conference with Georges Picot.

Mr. Jefferies described the Sykes-Picot Treaty as dividing the lionskin while the Turkish lion was still alive. The consequential map was like one that children draw when parcelling the moon into coloured strips. French and British were to divide Syria, and, so secret was the proceeding, that McMahon, the British Commissioner in Egypt, knew nothing. In fact he was kept in the same darkness as the Sultan himself and the poor man was engaged in making extensive promises to the Arabs, all of which they swallowed "in the Name of God the Merciful, the Compassionate". Palestine guaranteed to the Sheriff of Mecca by McMahon was secretly withdrawn from him by Sykes. It was not Mark's fault, for the military situation was desperate and the Arabs had to be enticed into revolt. McMahon at least sent the Sheriff a gift of £20,000 in gold: but that "eminent, energetic and magnanimous Minister", as the Sheriff hailed him, received the shock of his life when Mark called with a coloured map and asked "what do you think of my Treaty?" It was the first hint McMahon had of its existence. The aforesaid "God the Merciful, the Compassionate" allowed the bewildered High Commissioner to be quietly recalled.

Mark now had to nurse the Zionist bantling and finds record in Dr. Weizmann's *Trial and Error*. In February 1917 "Sir Mark spoke with the utmost freedom of the difficulties which confronted us. I may say that he placed all his diplomatic skill at our disposal and that without it we should have had much heavier going than we did. . . . His chief concern at the moment was the attitude of the Powers. Sir Mark had been in Russia, had talked with the Foreign Minister Sazonov and anticipated little difficulty from that quarter." France was the difficulty, wanting all Syria and much of Palestine. The Zionists must talk to the French, which meant, it was pointed out, that the French Rabbis would press for a French Palestine! "Sir Mark went on to speak of the Arab problem. Within a generation the movement would come into its own, for the Arabs had intelligence, vitality and linguistic unity. But he believed the Arabs would come to terms with us particularly if they received Jewish support in other matters. Sir Mark anticipated the attitude of the greatest of the Arabs, the Emir Feisel." The inevitable Picot was introduced personally into the conversations but neither of the begetters mentioned their Treaty! Dr. Weizmann learnt it in the nature of a shock the following month: "startling information, unjust to England, fatal to us and not helpful to the Arabs".

It was not until Allenby captured Jerusalem that the egregious Picot received his shock. The conqueror kindly permitted him to join the entering procession, after which Picot proposed he should set up Civil Government the next day! Lawrence has described the soldierly snub which he received. At any rate that was the end of Monsieur Picot.

The fall of Jerusalem, trumpeted as the climax of all the Crusades, was accompanied by the unsuspected appearance of the horizons of Zionism. This was destined to play an absorbing and final influence in Mark's life. It appears that he received a hint—one of those brain-waves which the insignificant often impose on the world-players—that if a national home were promised to the Zionists the effect in America would be immense.

In the United States the Allies had been strongly opposed by Irish-Americans and by Germans including German Jews.

The fact remained that the United States had delayed their entry into the War alarmingly. This could be laid on President Wilson, for ever with his ear to the ground and his vision in the clouds. Wilson's advisers included Justice Brandeis the Zionist leader. Mark Sykes took the hint like flame and submitted the idea to Balfour. Now that wise observer of the ways of nationalities and sub-nations had profited by his trip to Washington. He had come to a conclusion that England's critics in America must be diminished. This could be achieved only by granting Irish Home Rule or a Zionist Home. The Irish-Americans by now were tucked away in the American armies. They might trouble Wilson one day but not England at war. Zionism was the winning card and it was played with Mark's enthusiasm but behind Balfour's poker-face!

Still, Mark found influences were working against him at the Foreign Office but the trust which Jew, Arab and Armenian felt in him made him indispensable. Strange scenes were discerned upon the Foreign Office steps where the Zionist envoys were gathered in foggy expectation. Within, the Cabinet were deciding the text of Balfour's Declaration. Suddenly Mark appeared with the actual document, calling out: "Dr. Weizmann, it's a boy!"

The boy grew to become an *enfant terrible*, but for the time Balfour roused immense satisfaction from the Jewry of the world. As it was stated that "nothing should be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of the existing non-Jewish communities", the Arabs should have been equally assured.

The Balfour Declaration was issued in a letter to the nearest title known to a King of the Jews, that of Lord Rothschild (November 2, 1917). In March following Mark was arranging for the departure of a Zionist Commission with French and Italian envoys thrown in. An audience with the King had been his suggestion, but this was postponed owing to disquietening telegrams from Cairo. The Arabs were asking astonished questions. Dr. Weizmann pleaded for the audience and was engaged with Mark in wrathful discussion. The argument continued until Mr. Balfour was seen slowly

mounting the stairs of the Foreign Office. After half an hour's privacy Mark emerged to say that Mr. Balfour thought the audience should take place and was at that moment "telephoning to the Palace to explain that the whole misunderstanding had arisen through his own late arrival at the office"! Sometimes indeed British diplomacy bears a touch of the Oriental.

With the Armistice of November 11, 1918, the "remaining sands" of Mark's life were due to fall. The East had made him a fatalist and even had he known, he would not have acted otherwise. He was as sure as any Moslem of the *Kadebr* which is graven on every man's forehead.

On the day following the Armistice he reached Jerusalem and visited the Holy Sepulchre—before proceeding to the German Hostel on the Mount of Olives. Henceforth he moved as in a dream for he was worn almost to a shadow. The General Election was but a murmur on the horizon. He had other works in hand but he must have smiled to find himself returned by ten thousand of a majority: "Anyway, I cannot bother my head about it now as I have more important things to do. Is Europe in the throes of death or pangs of birth?"—a question to which thirty years have given no answer.

His immediate concern was to gather up the tangled threads in Syria. That wretched Picot Treaty haunted him and Zionism dogged his steps. He set forth for Paris to support the League of Nations: "No revenge but justice, reparation and security. I have accepted neither honour nor office." Like Lawrence he refused the Michael and George, the consolation prize of Empire. Both felt dismay at heart for the future of the Arabs. Mark had designed them a flag which he saluted himself amid immense enthusiasm. People rose to acclaim him. He had become a disposer of boundaries, an abettor of nationalities, a guardian of England's promises. He was trusted by them as the heaven-sent arbiter of their destinies.

To Paris then he went, looking like a deathmask, with a Pandora's box for luggage, wherein opposing hopes stifled each other. By February 1919 he had reached a hotbed of

intrigue, unblessed by God or Pope. Mark had to save Arabs from Jews and both from the claims of the French. The fate of the Armenians was written on his weakening heart: "If the Arabs desert the Armenians, may God desert them". The bitterness which he had found rising in Palestine had entered him. On February 7 he counselled with Lawrence and on February 16 he died. Lawrence wrote: "... his last week in Paris tried to atone. He had returned from a period of political duty in Syria, after his awful realisation of the true shape of his dreams, to say gallantly, I was wrong: here is the truth. His former friends would not see his new earnestness and thought him fickle and in error; and very soon he died. It was a tragedy of tragedies, for the Arab sake."

Such was Lawrence's finality of pronouncement. He had happier died himself in Paris for he lived to achieve immense fame. But he saw the Arab betrayed and his own promises trodden into the dust. He also came to "awful realisation of the truth" and in his strange manner sought atonement, refusing honours, relinquishing rank and name, re-serving in the lowest rank until the Merciful and Compassionate gave him the chance to cast his life away upon the roadside. For him also the *Kadehr* was engraven.

There was great mourning and crying of woe when Mark died. He had faced danger and disease in every corner of Asia and Africa. It was ironical that the Sunderer of Societies and Destroyer of Delights should find him in a luxurious Paris hotel. At any rate he attained the peace surpassing the understanding of any Peace Conference. In Jerusalem and in Westminster his Requiem was sung. Jews, Arabs and Armenians were united in grief. "The Armenian Nation" managed to send a wreath of red roses to his funeral before their own extinction. His Yorkshire monument was worthy of his life. His father had built a soaring Eleanor Cross on the Wolds and against one panel his figure lifesize was blazoned, armoured and sworded in bronze. In the background stood the Holy City and for scroll over his head the *Laetare Jerusalem*. No Crusader was ever more featly honoured.

It was generally believed that, had he lived, he would have altered many things in the final decisions of the victors. As it was, Statesmen, Kings and Prelates all bespoke the certain advance awaiting his career. They believed he would have reached the heights. Alas, when he found himself in the depths, he had no longer the will to live. Some sought to draw a consoling moral. Lord Curzon, whose hour of agony was yet to come, wrote: "Such lives seem intended as a model and an inspiration and possess a proportion and beauty like some work of art half-finished but yet perfect. . . ."

The Latin Poet had said all this before:

*"Ab scelus, ab facinus! properas quid flere, viator?
Non licet hic vitæ de brevitæ queri."*

His Cambridge College quietly added his name to the bottom of their War Memorial, where a contemporary passing was heard to murmur some such words as: "Oh, some College Servant? I don't remember the name—a fine old English one all the same!"

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